Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

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Editor's Note: The President was at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on August 20, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, August 20, 2004

Remarks in a Discussion at Southridge High School in Beaverton, Oregon

August 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for being here. Go ahead and be seated, please. Thanks for coming. Laura and I are here—we're here in your State asking for the vote. That's why we're here in the great State of Oregon. Today I've got a unique way to explain why I'm running for office again and what I intend to do, and that's to talk to some of our fellow citizens about job creation, job growth, the entrepreneurial spirit. It's one way to help make the point to the people of Oregon that there's more work to be done. Then I'd like to answer some of the questions you have.

But before I do so, I want to tell you how proud I am of Laura. You're going to hear reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is to have Laura as the First Lady for 4 years.

These campaigns, when you campaign for President, it's a long ordeal, and that's the way it should be, really. You should have to go out and ask for the vote and let people know your heart and your vision. It also means you get to spend some quality time with your family. [*Laughter*] So it's great to be traveling with Laura. And one of the really—joys for our family is that Barbara and Jenna are now campaigning with us. It's like going on the camping trip I never took them on, you know.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I like to tell everybody—I admit it—he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] However, that's not why I picked him. I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because he can do the job and his judgment.

I appreciate your friend and mine, your Senator, the great Gordon Smith, for traveling with us today. He's a joy to work with. He's a decent, gentle soul who cares deeply about the people of Oregon. He understands this State well. He's a great patriot. I'm proud to call him friend. I want to thank you for being here, Gordon. We just have come from announcing a project to deepen the Columbia River so that the port of Portland and Vancouver, Washington, can remain vibrant hubs of commerce. I like to remind people, in the Nation's Capital, a lot of them can talk a good game. I like to be the person known as somebody getting the job done, and this project we announced today is getting the job done. And I'm proud you're here, Sharon. Thanks for coming. It's great to see you again.

And old Greg Walden showed up. Thanks for coming, Greg. He's a good man, fun to work with. We worked on a lot of important projects for Oregon, including the Healthy Forest Initiative. You might remember, they've been talking about doing something about these catastrophic wildfires. We actually got the job done through the Healthy Forest Initiative.

It wasn't easy to get done, because some of the big talkers in Washington blocked it. One in particular finally came out west and he said, well, even though he had blocked it in the past, some of the parts looked like they're all right now, you know. It's kind of like those wildfires. He shifts in the wind. [*Laughter*]

As well, we've got a man running for the United States Senate from the State of Washington. I strongly support his candidacy, George Nethercutt. Thank you for coming, George.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. Again, I appreciate the small-business owners who are on stage and with us today. We're going to talk a lot about small business creation.

It's good to see my buddy Molly. Thanks for coming, Molly. I want to thank all the

grassroots activists who are here. Not only am I asking for the vote, I'm asking for your help. You see, we have a duty—we have a duty in this country to vote. And one of the things I'm asking our supporters is to register people to vote, encourage our fellow citizens to do their duty.

You know, it wasn't all that long ago—I'm going to talk about Afghanistan a little later on—but one of the interesting statistics that came to my desk was the fact that over 8 million people in liberated Afghanistan have registered to vote. This, in spite of the fact—it's an amazing statistic when you think about the fact that it wasn't all that long ago that a bus was stopped—the thugs from the Taliban pulled over four women registrars of voters and killed them. And yet, the people, because they long for freedom, said, "You're not going to intimidate us. We want to participate in a free society." They're registering to vote, and we herald that.

We ought to be—we ought to have that same spirit in our own country. And so, therefore, I ask you to register people to vote, and when you get them headed into the polls, or in your case, by ballot, head them our way, because we've got a plan to keep the country safer, stronger, and better.

Thank you all for coming. There's all kinds of ways to make America better. I'll talk about two, right quick. We're at a school. One way to make America better is to make sure every child learns to read and write and add and subtract. You might remember, when we went to Washington, when my administration went to Washington, there was this practice around the country in certain school districts where they would move children from grade to grade, year after year, and the children didn't learn the basics. So we changed that attitude. I went to Washington for a reason, and that is to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know what that means. It means, in certain places, the standards were so low that what they got were lousy results. And that's not good enough for this great country.

So I worked with Members of the Congress to pass new law that says: We'll increase funding for public schools; we'll increase funding for elementary and secondary schools by some 49 percent since I got there; we'll increase funding for Title I students by over 50 percent since I got there. But we also recognized that the issue is more than funding. The issue is results, and so we raised the standards. We said, "We expect accountability in our schools, to tell us whether or not children are learning to read and write and add and subtract."

We believe in local control of schools. When we find children in schools that won't change and won't teach, we demand something other than the status quo, and we're seeing great results. The achievement gap among students in America is beginning to close because we believe every child can learn.

I'm running because there's more to do to make sure we continue to raise the bar, to continue to insist on curricula that works. See, that's why you measure, because you want to know. You can't solve a problem unless you're willing to diagnose the problem in the first place. So we say to schools, "Show us early whether or not a child can read and write. And if not, there's extra help."

So that no child gets left behind, we've got to make sure our Head Start programs start children off early with the fundamentals of reading. We want to make sure our high school diplomas mean something. We need intervention programs for children who cannot read in junior high. We've got to be emphasizing math and science. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, the children of this country are going to be more hopeful, more confident, and have more of the skills necessary to succeed. And America will be better off for it.

Let me tell you what else we'll be better off to do. We'll be better off as we continue to rally the armies of compassion. You'll hear me talk about our military later on and our economy, but the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's the true strength of America. If you really think about it, you don't find it in the halls of Government; you find it in the hearts of people. And the President must understand that. And one of my most important jobs is to rally the armies of compassion, to call upon people to love their neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself.

And so, today Chris Dudley has joined us. You might remember him because of his exploits on the basketball court. A lot of kids are going to remember him because of the basketball camp he set up. It's the kind of compassion I'm talking about. We couldn't pass a law to say to old Dudley, give back to the community where you're living. He had to feel that in his heart. He had to say, "This is a call that I hear." Laws don't do this—from Government. People hear a higher calling. And those of us in positions of responsibility must not only thank people like Chris but say that we're willing to open up Government funding to grants to organizations that exist because of their faith—all faith—so that we can help save our society.

I appreciate you coming. Chris is one of the tallest soldiers in the army of compassion. [*Laughter*] Proud you're here. I want to thank you and Christine for coming. It's great to see you again.

A stronger America is one in which people can find work and our economy is vibrant. Listen, we've been through a lot together when you think about it. Over the past 3½ years, we have been through an awful lot. We've been through a recession. That means things are going backwards. [*Laughter*] We've been through a corporate scandal. By the way, we passed tough laws. It ought to be abundantly clear to CEOs in corporate America that we expect there to be honesty in the boardrooms of our country. We got attacked, and all of this affected our economy, affected our psychology as well.

But we've overcome these obstacles. We've overcome them because we've got a great workforce. We've overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, and we're going to talk to some entrepreneurs here in a minute. We've overcome it because we got great farmers and ranchers in this country. You know, we've overcome a lot because the soul of this country is strong. I think—I will argue strongly that we overcame these economic problems as well because of well-timed tax cuts.

Nationally, the economy is strong. It's getting strong. We've added about 1.5 million jobs. Nationwide, the unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. Here in the State of Oregon, you've been struggling. After all, your resource industry got hit hard. High-tech got hit hard. The recession hurt. Your unemployment rate, however, has gone from 8.7 percent to 6.8 percent. It's getting better, but there's more work to do. There's more work to do. And I want to share with you some of the things that I think we ought to be doing to make sure this economy continues to grow so people can find a job and to make sure jobs stay here in America.

First, we've got to make sure we got reasonable energy policy. We've got to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I've come to your State several times, and I said one thing we must not do is to destroy the hydroelectric power of the State of Oregon and the State of Washington in order to have a reasonable energy policy. Turns out we're capable of preserving the dams and protecting the fish, and we're showing people we're able to do so.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to have health care, reasonable health care policies that make health care available and affordable. I'm going to talk to these small-business owners, and you're going to hear from—maybe not from these, but I can assure you you'll hear from other small-business owners that they're having trouble meeting the health care demands. Health care costs are going up. I think one way to handle that is to allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so that they can afford insurance at the same rates as big companies are able to do.

We will continue to expand community health centers; those are places where low-income Americans can get primary care. We'd rather help people who need help in clinics rather than emergency rooms of hospitals, in order to help the cost of health care.

We've changed Medicare. You remember all the talk about Medicare. Campaign after campaign after campaign, they'd come and tell you, "We'll strengthen Medicare." We got the job done in Medicare. Seniors can now sign up for drug discount cards. If you're a senior and eligible, I urge you to do so. You'll save money.

In '05, for the first time, Medicare is going to provide preventative screenings. It makes sense, doesn't it? If we're spending your

money, we ought to be able to look at a problem early and solve it before it becomes acute. And in '06, seniors will have choices in the Medicare policy, including prescription drugs. It makes no sense, folks, to have a system that pays $100,000 for heart surgery and not one dime of pharmaceuticals to prevent the heart disease from occurring in the first place.

We'll use technology to help modernize health care. I mean, health care is like in the old ages. I mean, when you think about it, you carry your file from room to room, and it's handwritten, and most doctors can't write. [*Laughter*] We need to modernize the system to reduce costs and to reduce medical errors, and we will continue to do so.

I'll tell you what else we need in this country. To make sure these good folks can afford health care for their people, to make sure you can afford health care, we need medical liability reform. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I stand with the docs, the patients, the small-business owners. We need medical liability reform now.

Finally, in order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about trade policy. There's economic isolationists in our country that would like to wall us off from the rest of the world. That would be wrong. Presidents before me have decided to open up our markets for goods from overseas. You know why? If you're a consumer and you have more goods to choose from, you're likely to get a better quality good at a better price. That's the way the market works. And what we ought to be doing in trade is saying, "We treat you this way; you treat us equally as well. Open up your markets to U.S. products."

I've told the people of this State, if I got to be the President, I would work hard to open up markets for Oregon farm products, and we delivered. The agricultural sector of America is strong because people are eating Oregon wheat—that's why. And they're eating it from all over the world. Good trade policy will keep jobs here. We've got to be confident about our ability to compete. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the playing field is level.

What I'm telling you is, I've got a reason for running, to keep the country stronger. I've got an idea—I've got ideas to make sure that people can find work. I've got ideas to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. The role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, in which people feel confident about starting their own business and growing their small business to a larger business. And we've got some people on stage who represent the entrepreneurial spirit of America.

Our first guest is George Puentes. George is a—from Salem, Oregon. He is an entrepreneur. What do you make, George?

George Puentes. We make tortillas. Good ones. [*Laughter*]

The President. *Me gusto mucho.*

Mr. Puentes. *Esta bien.*

The President. So, like, when did you start?

[*Mr. Puentes made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you. Let me talk about that. Thank you, George. Let me explain that. Let me explain what he means. Part of the tax relief, when you hear us talking about tax relief, part of the tax relief was to allow small businesses to accelerate depreciation on investment, which really means that there is tax relief when they decide to spend extra money. That's what we're talking about, right? In other words, we're saying to the small-business sector, "We want you to invest."

What did you invest in?

Mr. Puentes. What did we invest in?

The President. Tortilla-making machines?

Mr. Puentes. Tortilla-making machines. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. So the Tax Code said to George, "We would like you to make decisions, investment decisions, more investment." That's what the tax relief said. He said "Okay, it made sense." He took a look, and his business was strong enough that he could make an investment.

The interesting thing about investment, and you must understand this, is that when somebody says, "I'm investing," what they're really saying is, "I'm buying"—in his case, a machine. And guess what? Somebody has to make the machine. So there's a worker who's benefiting from his decision. He says, "I want to purchase something extra. The tax relief has encouraged me to purchase something extra," and so somebody has got to make it. But not only does it help the worker making the machine, it helps the workers in George's factory that he's buying better machines. When he buys and upgrades his equipment, a tortilla worker for George is more likely to find his work—keep his work. In other words, they become more productive. Is that an accurate assessment?

Mr. Puentes. That is extremely accurate.

The President. Whew. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

Mr. Puentes. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Just out of curiosity, did you hire anybody this year, or are you going to?

Mr. Puentes. We've hired over 30 employees this year already——

The President. Yes, there you go. See, that's what's happening in the country: Small business after small business after small business, they're hiring people. They're adding 34 employees here, 34 there, and it's adding up. And you know what's interesting? Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And a lot of this tax relief that was opposed by some in Washington, DC, was aimed at our small-business sector.

We had a problem. The problem was the recession caused people to lose work. So I decided, why don't we put policy in place that will encourage the job creators to expand. That's what the tax relief was all about, when you think about it. In other words, what people don't know is that most small businesses pay individual income taxes. George's company doesn't. He's what I call a C corp. But our next speaker's company does. She is—her company is called an S corp or a sole proprietorship——not in her case—but sole proprietorships as well pay individual income taxes. So when you reduce individual income taxes for S corps and sole proprietorships, you're really saying, "We're going to stimulate the small-business sector of America." And it's paying off. I'm telling you, it's paying off.

Ready to go? Jana, you ready to talk? She is an S corp. What do you do?

Jana Taylor. We manufacture cookies and cookie dough.

The President. Yes. That's why I ride my mountain bike, so I can eat your cookie and cookie dough.

Ms. Taylor. And we buy Oregon wheat.

The President. Yes, that's good. See, so she's what they call an S corp. She's a person that, when they pay tax in their business, they pay at the individual income tax rate. So I said when we cut taxes, everybody who pays taxes ought to get relief. We ought not to play favorites with the tax relief plan.

And you received relief. Did it help? I'm not a lawyer, but it sounds like I am. I'm leading the witness. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Taylor. No, it definitely helped. And when you get to go to work every day because it's your own passion and what you do and love best, you get to put back into the company which, again, fosters more employment, more efficiencies, better productivity, capacity, and technology. We basically put that money back into advancing the company forward.

The President. Yes. You know something about Jana? She started her company in her own kitchen. See, that is—what a fantastic story, isn't it? That's a great story of America, when you think about it. You start—you say, "I want my own business. I want to own my own business." Jana says, "I think I've got what it takes to own my own business." We need to promote ownership in America. We want more people owning things in this country. If you own your own business—you heard her, I didn't write what she said. She said, "I wake up every day enthused about what I'm doing."

Anyway, are people eating cookie dough these days?

Ms. Taylor. And a lot of it.

The President. They are? Good.

So give us employees and all that, how many you've got?

[*Ms. Taylor made brief remarks.*]

The President. One of the things Jana and I talked about before was it's very important for Government to help people with something they don't have enough time of, and that is time. They just don't have enough of it, time. And we were talking about flex-time and comp-time rules. It turns out the Federal Government, in case you don't know this, needs to pass a law that will allow many businesses—enable their workers to have flex-time rules, which means you can figure out—gear your own schedule to meet your own needs, or comp-time rules, which will allow you to take some overtime for your own personal use. You can change overtime pay for extra time to be with your family or to be with a loved one or to go back to school, whatever you may think you want to do. And Jana and I were talking about it. You've done some of that in your own company?

Ms. Taylor. Within the boundaries of the legal and opportunity——

The President. Of course within the boundaries of law. [*Laughter*] We're not diming you out here. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Taylor made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, it's called flex-time. Congress—we'll work with Congress. One reason I'm running again is to put rules in place to not only help the entrepreneur but, more importantly, help the workers be able to balance their own time so they can do—[*applause*].

Thanks, Jana. Good luck. I'm really proud of your story.

See, when you hear people say, "I started my company at the kitchen table," that spirit must exist in this country for a long time coming. It's called the entrepreneurial spirit. That's what that means.

We're with Kathy LaCompte. Kathy is a tree grower. Yes, there's a lot of trees. So what kind of trees?

Kathy LaCompte. We grow trees from seed, and we support the Christmas tree farms, the timber industry, and the wholesale nursery industry here in Oregon.

The President. Very good. You're the seedling provider.

Ms. LaCompte. I'm the seedling provider. You're the seedling grower. We could work together.

The President. See, I told her we have a tree farm on our ranch in Crawford. [*Laughter*] It turns out the trees—seedlings she raises won't survive where we live. [*Laughter*] Let me ask you—employees—give us a sense for your business.

Ms. LaCompte. We have 17 employees year-round. And we bump up to around 65 employees during our harvest season, which is the first quarter of every year.

The President. Right, and how so—how is your outlook? Upbeat, not so upbeat?

Ms. LaCompte. We've had a good outlook. Your Healthy Forests Restoration Initiative was a good help for us.

The President. Yes, good.

Ms. LaCompte. When we can manage those forests wisely, they can be replanted. Oregon has very strict replanting laws, and so we can provide the seedlings for that replanting. That helps our nursery.

The President. That's good, yes. It turns out trees are a renewable resource that can and must be looked after. It's interesting, if you just let them sit there and rot, they turn into kindling. [*Laughter*] And some of the most dramatic memories of my Presidency were flying over the fires in Oregon last summer. I mean, it was—it's unbelievable. It was—it's an imagery that a lot of people out East need to see before they make policy, so they understand the consequences of bad policy. [*Applause*] All right.

Kathy and I were also talking about health care. She—there's an interesting new product available for our citizens, and they're called health savings accounts. Basically what it means is, is that you buy a catastrophic plan with a high deductible and that you then contribute tax-free from zero to the limits of your deductible, and you can earn that money tax-free. It's your money. If you don't spend that money in the year in which you contribute it, you roll it over tax-free. So you, in essence, have a savings account for health. And yet if things get rough, there's a catastrophic plan to take care of your health care. That's what we want.

And these plans really do a couple of things. One, they make sure that the patient and the doctor are central to the health care decisionmaking process in the country. But they're also an innovative way to hold down

costs. And the other thing is, is that since it's your money, you see how much money you have in your health account; you're probably going to make wiser decisions with your body. In other words, it's part of making sure that you make good choices so that you end up saving money from that which you contributed.

Interestingly enough, Kathy has one of these accounts. Has it worked?

Ms. LaCompte. It has worked. We had a MSA, a medical savings account, when they were first introduced probably 12 or 15 years ago, and it's worked really well for us. And so we were really anxious to have one of those available for employees. So we've been investigating that, and I think we'll go ahead and invest in that for our employees.

The President. Yes, you ought to look at it. I urge small-business owners to look at health savings accounts. It's a way to hold down costs. You can contribute, along with your employee—it depends upon your choice. You can contribute into the account itself, but the employee—this is a portable account, obviously. The person owns the account. We have a different—we have a changing world, when you think about it. People are going from job to job, and it makes sense for them to be able to carry a health care policy with them from job to job—part of an ownership society.

You investing in anything this year?

Ms. LaCompte. We did invest this year. We were able to build a new packing facility and office complex. And it's just lovely, and we're really happy.

The President. She showed me a picture of it. It is spectacular.

Ms. LaCompte. It is. It's wonderful.

The President. Did you build it yourself? Or did you actually hire somebody?

Ms. LaCompte. We had some people help——

The President. That's how the economy works. She has a—the picture I hope we're beginning to paint is, is that there are millions of decisions that take place throughout our economy because the Tax Code has encouraged these decisions, which, in turn, stimulates growth. Somebody had to come and build the place. You just heard her. She didn't do it herself. She actually paid somebody. Somebody had to buy the nails. In other words, that's how the economy works. Government's role is to provide economic stimulus to encourage people's decision-making, which then leads to jobs, and that's precisely what we've done.

And in this campaign, I urge people to be careful about falling prey to the rhetoric, "I am going to spend this money and pay for it by taxing the rich." That's what you're hearing again, isn't it? That's political rhetoric. So, I'm running against a fellow, he's made about $2.2 trillion of new promises. [*Laughter*] And we've still got September and October to go. [*Laughter*] And so they said to him, "So how are you going to pay for it?" they said. They said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, we're going to tax the rich." Remember, when you tax the rich, you're taxing S corps and sole proprietorships. When you start running up those tax rates on individuals, the people who start paying are the small-business owners. I told you, by far, the vast majority of small businesses in America are sole proprietorships or S corps. And if they are halfway successful, he's running the taxes up on them. And why would you want to be taxing the job creators of America? It's bad economic policy to run up the taxes.

I'll give you one other thought. Let me just leave you with one other thought about taxing the rich. You know how that works. A lot of the rich are able to get accountants, so they don't—they're able to dodge. You've seen it before. We're going to tax the rich, and then they figure out how not to get taxed. And so guess who ends up paying? You do. And we're not going to let him do it to us. We're not going to let him wreck that economy by running up our taxes.

Okay, hold on. We've got more work to do here. We've got more work to do. Right, Vail?

Vail Horton. Yes, sir.

The President. Vail Horton. I want you to hear this story. This is a fabulous story of an entrepreneur. Tell us your story, Vail.

[*Mr. Horton made brief remarks.*]

The President. One thing you do have is a heart and a soul and the desire to improve yourself. And I hope your business does well.

Listen, what a fantastic country, isn't it, where somebody has got a dream and says, "I'm going to overcome obstacles and work to realize my dream." He's expanding. He's growing. The tax relief has helped on the investment side. I'll tell you why: Because people can take a tax deduction on the investment they make when they buy a piece of his equipment. In other words, it's stimulated demand for his products. And this guy is going to make it. There's no doubt in my mind. Thanks for coming.

Listen, I appreciate you all coming. I want to talk about one other thing right quick, and that is—it's important to talk about our economy, but one way to make sure we continue to grow is to keep us safe. That's my most solemn duty, is to work to keep the country safe. First of all, you've got to know, nobody wants to be a war President. It's—I just can't imagine anybody saying, "Gosh, I wish war would happen on my watch." It's tough on the country to be at war, and this is a war that came to us not because of our asking, by the way. It came because of an enemy which cannot stand what we stand for, and that's freedom—freedom to worship the way you want, freedom to realize your dreams.

I want to share some lessons that are critical to our security and to peace. First, the nature of this enemy is—it's hard for us to understand in America. These are cold-blooded killers. You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot reason. You cannot hope for the best. We must bring them to justice before they hurt us again. [*Applause*] Thank you. You can't show weakness to these people. You cannot show weakness. That's the nature of these folks.

Second lesson is, is that this is a different kind of war. This is the kind of war where these people will hide in dark corners of the world or find a cave and plot and plan. They're patient. They'll wait until they find a moment, and they'll strike. And therefore, in order to secure our country, we must not only bring them to justice; we must say to those who provide them safe harbor, "You're equally as guilty as the terrorists who have conducted the raids." And when you say something, you better mean it, in order to make the world a more peaceful place.

So I said to the Taliban, "You're harboring these folks. Give it up." And they defied us, and we took action. We gave them a chance. The use of our military is the last option for a President—the last option. And they had their choice, and they refused to listen to America and our allies and friends, and we removed them from power. And as a result, Afghanistan is no longer a training base for Al Qaida. Remember, they had trained thousands of people there. They're an ally in the war on terror. It's hard to envision that after 4 short years, they're now heading to Presidential elections. That's an amazing thought, isn't it? The world is better off. America is safer because of the actions we took in Afghanistan. And equally as important, the people in that country are better off.

I was in Cleveland, Ohio, the other evening for the International Children's Games. And I was welcoming children from all around the world, and right in my vision—I'm talking front row—was the Afghan girls soccer team. And I can assure you their life has improved so dramatically from the days in which their mothers would be summarily whipped in public because they held a belief in stark contrast to the dim vision of those barbarians who were running Afghanistan.

The third lesson is that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it fully materializes. That's a lesson of September the 11th. And that is a vital lesson of September the 11th, and that is a lesson this country must never forget. See, you cannot hope for the best with these people. If we see a threat, we must deal with it, always first through diplomacy. And that helps explain some of the rationale for the decision I made on Saddam Hussein.

See, we saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. Now, remember his history. He had used weapons of mass destruction. That meant he was a threat, because one of the most dangerous parts of this new war is that there is an enemy who will chop somebody's head off, just like that, who would love to get ahold of weapons of mass destruction to inflict even greater damage than the deeds they did on September the 11th. That's the nature of these people.

And so we saw a threat. He was the guy who had used them. He was a sworn enemy

of America. He had actually paid families of suicide bombers. That's the ultimate terrorist act, isn't it, to go kill innocent people as a suicider, and he was willing to subsidize their families. He had terrorist organizations inside his country. Make no mistake about it. A guy named Abu Nidal, a fierce terrorist who killed a guy named Leon Klinghoffer because he happened to be Jewish—his organization did—they were in and out of Baghdad. Zarqawi—he's the person who has ordered the beheading of innocent people in order to shake our will—he was in and out of Baghdad. These are terrorist organizations. So we saw a threat.

But I recognized that it was important to bring the country together as best as possible on this issue. So I went to the United States Congress, and I said, "Look, we see a threat, and we see the lessons of September the 11th. What do you think?" And so the Congress looked at the intelligence, and they remembered the facts. Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence and came to the same conclusion I had come to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

I also knew we ought to work the diplomatic front, so I went to the United Nations. And I stood in front of the United Nations and said, "Listen, we think Saddam Hussein is a threat, and you've said he had been a threat year after year, resolution after resolution. And the world has changed after September the 11th, so why don't we collectively deal with him?" And they passed a resolution, on a 15-to-nothing basis, that said Saddam's a threat; he must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. That's exactly what the resolution said.

And so we had a diplomatic front, sent the message to Saddam Hussein. He defied the world. He said—I can't put words in the fellow's mouth, but it seemed like he said, "Who cares what you say?" And we said, "Well, let's—why don't we send inspectors. Let's go send inspectors in to find out the truth." And he systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I'm left with a choice. We've tried diplomacy. We've tried inspections. This guy doesn't really care what the free world has told him. Do I trust a madman? Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th? Or do I take action necessary to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America.

Knowing what I know today—see, I thought we were going to find stockpiles. So did everybody else, you know. They might be. We haven't found them yet, I recognize that. But we do know he had the capability of making weapons. And after September the 11th, how could we take a risk that he wouldn't pass that capability on to an enemy. I do know that the minute the world, once again, had passed a resolution and nothing happened, he would be emboldened and strengthened with that capability. Knowing what I know today, I would make the same decision. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And the world is better off because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell. We're a safer country.

You know, it's an interesting—we've had an interesting dialog in this campaign thus far. My opponent voted for the resolution. Then the Democrat primary came about, and he declared himself the antiwar candidate. [*Laughter*] And then he finally said, "Knowing what we know today, I would have continued to vote for the Iraq resolution." So he's been there, not been there, been there. We've got 80 days left. There's no telling what his position will be. [*Laughter*] But I think it's important that everybody understand clearly where people stand when you're running for President of the United States.

A couple of other points. I want to thank our troops. It's—we've got a great military. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And thank our veterans who are here too.

Okay. Got a little more to go here. [*Laughter*] I'm just getting wound up. So anytime we put our troops into harm's way, they deserve the full support of our Government. During—I just want to remind everybody about the facts. I submitted a supplemental funding request to the Congress in September of last year to make sure our troops had body armor and spare parts, fuel, ammunition, the things necessary to be able to do their mission. It passed the Congress—overwhelmingly passed the Congress. Members of both political parties supported the request. In the United States Senate, as Gordon might recall, only 12 Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and

his runningmate—voted against funding for our troops in combat.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So when asked, his explanation was, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. He went on to say, "Well"—when pressed, he said, well, he's proud of the vote, and then said, well, it was a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about giving our troops that which they need to do their mission.

A couple of other points—let me make a couple of other points, and I'll answer some questions. There's a lot of talk about coalitions, and we need to work with our friends and allies in this different kind of war because you've got to share intelligence, and you've got to work with your friends and allies to cut off money and deny people sanctuary and access. And it requires close collaboration, and that's what we're doing. That's what we're doing. I talk to Tony Blair all the time. He and I are from, I would say, different parts of the political spectrum, but we share a same understanding of the world in which we live, that we've got to be firm and diligent in running down these enemies, and we've got to deny them safe harbor, and we've got to spread freedom.

And I think it's wrong to denigrate the contributions of our allies in Iraq by saying that there is no coalition, we're going it alone. There's over 30—about 30 nations involved. These strong leaders, from Italy to Japan to South Korea—all around the world—have joined with the United States. We ought not to be denigrating their contribution. We ought to be thanking the moms and dads of those countries whose sons and daughters are in harm way.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, hold on. We're running out of time here. I've still got more to say—[*laughter*]—much to Laura's chagrin. [*Laughter*]

People say, "How long are they going to be there?" They will be there until we complete the mission in Afghanistan and Iraq. The mission is a country that can defend itself, and a free country. That's the mission. I talk to parents all the time. I say, "Listen, I want your child home as quickly as possible." But we must not send mixed signals. We must stay the course until the job is done.

The other day, my opponent said in the heat of political—in the heat of the political arena, said, "Well, they'll—if I'm elected, they'll be substantially—the troops will be substantially reduced in 6 months." That's a bad signal to send. You know, you've got an enemy out there listening to every word that's being said in America, so they say, "All we've got to do is sit around, and we'll wait for 6 months and one day." So when you say we'll substantially reduce our troops by 6 months, it not only affects the thinking of the enemy, it also affects the thinking of allies.

Think about those Iraqis. Think about the Iraqi citizens who are wondering whether or not America will keep its word. You got to remember, this country is a country which has gone from tyranny to freedom, and that's a hard transition to make in a quick period of time. And they're wondering whether or not we're really willing to stand with them as they make the hard choices necessary to get to a free society.

Let me talk about a free society. The other day I was campaigning in Phoenix, and I saw a sign—a woman held up a sign that said, "My son is in Iraq." And it was a proud sign to hold up. And I looked at her in the midst of this rally, and I said, "I just want you to know, tell your son, your son is a part of an historic moment because the world is changing." And the world is changing because liberty is beginning to spread its wings in parts of the world that is desperate for freedom.

The short-term strategy is to find this enemy and defeat them so we don't have to face them here at home. The long-term strategy is to spread freedom, because free societies don't export terror. Free societies are hopeful societies. Free societies are societies that are less likely to breed the resentment and anger necessary for killers to recruit youngsters. That's what we're talking about, really, when you think about it. And it has worked throughout our history. Liberty has worked, and that's what is important for our fellow citizens to remember.

A couple of images I want to share with you, and then I'll answer some questions.

One, the image of the Iraqi soccer team playing in this Olympics. It's fantastic, isn't it? What a fantastic thought. Remember—I don't know if you read the Sports Illustrated article about—I think it was Uday, one of Saddam's thug sons who would torture Olympians because they weren't able to succeed. Here's a country now, battling for a country that is now free. It wouldn't have been free if the United States had not acted.

Secondly, I want to tell you the story, which I share a lot with people, about having dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. Laura and I like him a lot. He is the Prime Minister of Japan. He's a good guy. And you know, we're eating Kobe beef there in Tokyo and—[*laughter*]—pretty fancy. You get good food when you're the President. [*Laughter*] And I was really impressed during the moment to think that, you know, my dad had fought against Japan in World War II. Many of your dads had fought against the Japanese in World War II. They were our enemy. And here I am talking to the leader of a former enemy, and we were talking about peace. See, we were talking about North Korea, how best we can work together to keep the peace. Isn't that a fantastic thought, that former enemies are now working together for the sake of peace, for our own security, and for world peace.

It would not have happened had my predecessors not believed in the ability of liberty to transform societies. You might remember, after World War II, there were a lot of people who doubted whether or not the Japanese could self-govern, could possibly shirk their militaristic ways, that they could possibly be a friend of the United States. But fortunately, predecessors of mine and Gordon's and the Congressman believed in the power of liberty to transform the attitudes and ways of people. And because we stuck to that belief, that firm belief that is ingrained in this Nation's soul, Japan is now an ally. Someday, an elected leader of Iraq, whether it be Prime Minister or President, will be sitting down with an American President talking about how to keep the peace.

These are historic times. We're living in historic times. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we not only serve the security of our Nation and spread peace, but by securing the ideal of liberty, we listen to the deepest beliefs in our soul, and that is, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Let me—I can keep telling stories, or I'll answer questions. Want another story? All right, one more story, and I'll answer questions.

I'm sitting in the Oval Office; the door opens up. First of all, the Oval Office is a powerful place. It is an unbelievably beautiful room. It is a shrine to democracy. And it's—it quiets the most active tongues, except for Mother. [*Laughter*] Anyway, so the door opens up, and in walks seven Iraqi men. They had come to see me. A fellow called and said, "This is an interesting story. I think you ought to meet them." They came in. All of them had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had devalued, and he was looking for scapegoats.

I asked one fellow, I said, "Why you?" Well, he was a jeweler, and he needed gold, and he sold dinars to buy dollars or euros. In other words, he was in the currency exchange during which the dinar had devalued. And he got plucked out of the population, sent into the prison, had his hand cut off, a X branded in his forehead as well. I think they told me, if I'm not mistaken, the Government also charged him for his time in prison.

This is a brutal thing. These seven guys have had their lives, obviously, scarred by Saddam Hussein and his thugs. There's a documentary made of them. And a guy in Houston, a newsman named Marvin Zindler, who had set aside a foundation to help people who were hurting, whether they be in America or elsewhere, saw the story, flew these guys over to Houston, Texas, where they were outfitted with new hands, and now they've come to see me.

And you know, what a stark contrast that is, isn't it? It's just so vivid and such a powerful imagery to think about the difference between a brutal tyrant who can pluck somebody out of obscurity and maim them for life and a country that is so compassionate and decent that an individual citizen calls them over and fits them with a new hand.

And when the guy took the Sharpie and wrote "God bless America" in Arabic, it was a powerful moment to remind me about what a wonderful land we have. That's why I love America so much.

Let me answer some questions. Let me answer some questions, and then I've got to head north. [*Laughter*] I've got a little more work to do in Washington.

Yes, sir. Go ahead, yell her out.

Support for the President

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you very much. You can leave it at that if you like.

Q. I'm wondering if I can get some inauguration tickets. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, that's good. [*Laughter*] I like an optimist.

Tax Cuts/Homeownership

Q. I started my business last October, and it was a dream. But it's been going—[*inaudible*]—everybody I talk to, all my customers, they say the same thing. If it wasn't for your tax cuts and your stimulus and your steady hand since 9/11, my job would never happen—[*inaudible*]—because of your stimulus package.

The President. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. Let me say something about homeownership. Do you realize that the homeownership rate in America is at an all-time high? Isn't that a fantastic thought? Don't you love the fact that some—more and more people are opening up their door, saying, "Welcome to my home. This is my piece of property."

One thing about this administration is, we understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the country. We will continue to spread an ownership society throughout America.

What you got? Yes, ma'am. We've got to turn on the mike there. No, you don't have to. Somebody else is supposed to. [*Laughter*]

Texas Air National Guard

Q. Can you hear me now?

The President. Yes, ma'am. I like the cowboy boots, strong look.

Q. I thought you might like that.

The President. Yes. Yes, it's strong.

Q. Actually, 33 years ago I was working with the Texas Air National Guard.

The President. Oh, fantastic.

Q. From October of '71 to May of '72, you and I knew each other. So you were there.

The President. Oh, thank you. Thank you. Good to see you again. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir. Thanks for your service, Sergeant.

2004 Campaign Events

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Do what?

Q. Any fundraising dinners before the election?

The President. Fundraising dinners, no—sure, there will be some. But I'd rather do these kinds of events. I want people to know what I stand for, what I believe, where I want to lead the country. There's more to do. I hope you leave here and walk out and say, "What did he say? He said there's more to do to make this country a safer, stronger, and better place."

Yes, sir.

Judicial Nominations

Q. Mr. President, God bless you and your wife, Laura, first of all.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. And I would like to know in your second term what you are going to do to move more commonsense judges into our courts and get rid of these—[*applause*].

The President. Thank you, sir. Thanks. I have a responsibility to pick people who will represent this country admirably and strongly on the bench. It's one of my most important duties. I picked people who will strictly interpret the law, not use the bench from which to legislate. That's the judicial philosophy of the people I have picked. And I named a lot of good people from all walks of life. I named a fellow named Miguel Estrada to the DC Circuit Court. It's an important bench. It's a fantastic story. He came up from Honduras. He's a self-made guy, struggled with learning a new language. He comes to this great country. He's such a brilliant lawyer that he's nominated by the President, and he's blocked by a handful of United States Senators. That's the problem we have. We've

got people playing politics with American justice, and it's not right.

And so to answer your question, I'll continue—they're not going to intimidate me. I'll continue nominating the people—I will continue nominating people that I know will represent my philosophy and make the courts a better place. And the way to answer your question about what else to do, put people like George Nethercutt in the United States Senate.

Yes, ma'am.

President's Military Service

Q. Mr. President, you were a fighter pilot, and you were with the 147th Fighter Wing——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——and flew a very dangerous aircraft, the Delta F–102.

The President. Right. And I'm still standing.

Q. And I thank you for serving our country. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you.

Q. Thank you for serving.

The President. I appreciate you saying that.

Yes, sir.

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Kerry seems to have a lot of trouble remembering dates: when and if he was in Cambodia; who was President, Nixon or Johnson, when he was assigned to Vietnam; what bills in Congress he worked for and when; cannot remember if he campaigned in Oregon or California for George McGovern. Your last opponent you exposed with fuzzy math. It's time to expose John Kerry with fuzzy memory.

The President. You got a question?

Education

Q. I, too, want to say God bless you, Mr. Bush. My husband and my twins and I pray for you daily, as do many home-schoolers. Thank you for recognizing home-schoolers.

The President. You bet. Thanks. Yes, I appreciate you saying that. Listen, the best education always starts in the home. That's where it always starts.

I tell people a lot that it's very important that we work to usher in a culture of personal responsibility. Let me tell you what that means. It means that if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. And if Laura were up here, she would say that part of that responsibility is, start reading to your child early, is give your child the basics of reading. And I appreciate you saying that.

And thank you for your prayers. The fact that a lot of people in this country pray for me and Laura is heartwarming, strengthening, and a great aspect of the American experience.

Anybody up there? Anybody in the end zone have a question?

Presidential Debates

Q. Mr. President?

The President. All right, let her rip. Yes, ma'am. Oh, you want him to do it? You were the question gatherer-upper.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Presidential debates——

The President. Presidential debates. You bet.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—How about having Dick Cheney do more than one this time.

The President. Okay, well—he's going to be great. I'm looking forward to the debates. It's going to be—a really a good chance to show people what I believe. And it's—that's what it is. It's a chance to stand up with Senator Kerry by my side, and he and I will talk about what we intend to do. And it's a great opportunity for the people to sort through the issues and to get a sense for our respective visions. And I'm looking forward to them. It's—you know, I've done them in the past, and I'll do them this time around. And I can't say they're a lot of fun, but they're necessary, and they're an important part of the process. And I appreciate the debate sponsors for putting them on.

Yes, ma'am.

Military Service/Iraq/Palestinian State

Q. Hi. My brother-in-law served under your father at Desert Storm, Sgt. Scott Aclair. He is serving at Fort Richardson in Alaska right now and is scheduled to go to Iraq and is just hoping that you are going to be his President that he can serve under again when he goes back there. And when he found out

that I would be here, he just asked one thing, if I could shake your hand for him.

The President. Yes, you can. You want to shake it right now? All right.

I want you to remind your brother-in-law what I just said about his mission. Again, I repeat, these are historic times. We're going to look back and say, "Thank goodness we stuck to our beliefs. Thank goodness we had great faith and value in freedom," because a free Iraq right there in the heart of the Middle East is going to speak to the hopes and aspirations of a lot of people. There's a lot of people watching, I'm telling you—a lot of people watching. The Iraqis are watching. They're watching us. A lot of people are watching in the neighborhood.

You know, one of my dreams is that there be a Palestinian state, a peaceful Palestinian state, a state that's willing to live with our friends the Israelis, where violence isn't the norm, where violence is not the policy, where the leaders of the Palestinians listen to the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people so we can have peace in that vital part of the world.

This is what we are talking about. These are historic times that are going to make an enormous difference in the lives of a lot of people, including ourselves.

Yes, sir.

John Kerry's Military Service

Q. Yes, Mr President——

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. On behalf of Vietnam veterans—and I served six tours over there—we do support the President. I only have one concern, and that's on the Purple Heart, and that is, is that there are over 200,000 Vietnam vets that died from Agent Orange and were never—no Purple Heart has ever been awarded to a Vietnam veteran because of Agent Orange because it's never been changed in the regulations. Yet, we've got a candidate for President out here with two self-inflicted scratches, and I take that as an insult.

The President. Well, I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you for your service. Six tours? Whew. That's a lot of tours.

Let's see, who've we got here? You got a question?

Freedom of Religion

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President, for visiting Oregon. I've heard through the grapevine that Oregon is one of the most unchurched States in the Union, and I really feel like it shows up in every walk of our society. Could you take a moment to pray for Oregon, for us, right now?

The President. Well, I appreciate that. I'd—look, I think this. I think the thing about our country that you must understand is that one of the most valuable aspects of America is that people can choose church or not church, and they're equally American. That is a vital part of our society.

It's really important. It's very important that we jealously guard that tradition of America. See, it's the ability to say, "I believe or don't believe," which, in itself, is a valuable freedom that we must never surrender. That's what causes us to stand in stark contrast to nations all around the world. And if you choose to believe, you're equally American if you're Christian, Jew, Muslim, or Hindi. That's the great thing about our country. It's this great freedom. It's the fact that we're free to worship the way we see fit, in itself, is a vibrant part of the soul of America. Remember, that's what—when I was talking about the Taliban, they would drag people out in the public squares for whippings because they did not ascribe to their dim view of religion. And that's the opposite of what we believe in in America.

And so I appreciate what you say, but people in this country need to honor everybody's decision they make about religion. As you know, I've made my choice, and I—I'm—as I told you, I appreciate the prayers of the people. And it's—the prayers are a sustaining aspect of my life. But so long as I'm the President, and I suspect every President after me, hopefully, will jealously guard the great freedom of religion which is a part of our country's heritage.

You're next. No, you're not next. [*Laughter*] I mean, you're not up. You're next. [*Laughter*]

Q. Excuse me.

The President. Sorry.

September 11

Q. Mr. President, I want to——

The President. ——Jack in the Box. Go ahead.

Q. ——I want to thank you for everything you did after September 11th. I was in Israel then, and it was hard getting back. And it was very devastating. And you—no one could have done what you did any better.

The President. Thank you so much.

Q. And I want to thank you for your policies and your support and partnership with Israel.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. So, on September the 11th, I'm worried about my family. After we got airborne and moving around, I called Laura. She was safe. And at some point during the day, I tried to find my mother and father. I didn't know where they were, and I wanted to let them know I was safe. And I finally got them on the phone. I said, "Where are you?" They said, well—I think they said, "Milwaukee, Wisconsin." I said, "Oh, yeah? What are you doing there?" She said, "You grounded my plane." [*Laughter*]

Yes, little fellow. What do you got? What grade are you in? Excuse me.

Education

Q. Sixth.

The President. That-a-boy.

Q. Our superintendent makes over 200,000 a year, and he fired my librarian. Why is that? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, let me answer this by telling you—hold on for a minute. Hold on for a minute. I believe in local control of schools. [*Laughter*] The great thing is, you can find your superintendent because he lives in the neighborhood. You couldn't find him if you were in Washington. [*Laughter*] And I can't answer your question why, but Laura was a librarian, so maybe the superintendent ought to talk to the librarian, Laura. But no, I don't know. [*Laughter*]

Let's see here. Yes, you got one.

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Okay, you're last—you'll be next.

Audience member. What about me, George? [*Laughter*]

Advice for Entrepreneurs

Q. I'm another young entrepreneur. I work with Vail there and——

The President. You work with this guy?

Q. I work with that guy right there.

The President. Fabulous partner, I bet.

Q. He's a good guy to work with. Also, I'm a new homeowner, I thought I'd add, one of those guys you talked about. Anyways, I was wondering if you had specific advice for us to make sure we succeed.

The President. That's an interesting question. Let's see, make sure your sales are bigger than your expenses. [*Laughter*] Don't borrow more money than you can afford to pay back. [*Laughter*] Listen to your customers. Work your customer accounts really hard. Make products or come up with products that people actually want. Dream big, and work hard.

You're last. You're next, I promise you. After all that exercise, you ought to be able to ask a question. [*Laughter*]

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, as a child, how can I help you get votes?

The President. Thank you. That is the kind of question I like to hear. [*Laughter*] Thank you. Okay, here are some things you can do. First, you can find—you can put signs up in people's yards who want the signs in their yards. [*Laughter*] Second——

Audience member. Come and work in my county.

The President. Yes, come and work in her county. Secondly, here's another suggestion, like, if you've got a friend who may have a older brother or sister who is 18 years old, say to them, "Register to vote, and then please do me a favor, vote on my behalf for George W. Bush." [*Laughter*]

Okay, this is going to be my last question. I'm sorry. We could stay here all day, but I've got another assignment. I've got to head up to Washington State. I'm on the move. I'm campaigning hard. I'm working as hard as I possibly can.

Last question.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. No, I can't do it. If I did you, then they wouldn't believe me. I said "last question," and if it's the next-to-last

question, then somebody will say, "Wait a minute, you said last question and you didn't do it." Go ahead.

Education

Q. And she should come see us because we have the Chuck-E-Cheese restaurant, and we could make her happy.

The President. There you go. Very good. That's called selling. [*Laughter*]

Q. That's right. And tagged on to that, most of our employees are 16 and 18 years old, young, hard-working kids. And the problem is they can't afford to go to college——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——because of the funding has been cut back. How can we change that?

The President. No, I appreciate that. It's a great question. Actually, at the Federal level, the funding has not been cut back. Now, maybe at the State level. But Pell grants, for example, are up. Pell grants are grants for people to go to college. We've—since I've been the President, a million more people have gone to college on Pell grants. Student loans are up—student loans are up.

One of the most important initiatives that I have put forth and will continue to push is a community college initiative. And I'll tell you why: Because we live in a world where the jobs—the nature of the jobs change. And these jobs require a different skill set, and there needs to be a place where people can go back and get a different skill set to fill these jobs. And the best place to do so is community colleges.

And we've got a lot of money in Washington, trade adjustment assistance and displaced workers money. I happen to think it's very well spent money to enable—whether they be younger workers or older workers—to go back and get the skills necessary to fill new jobs. And I think about—I've been traveling our country a lot, and I've been to community colleges all over America. Mesa Community College in the Phoenix area, for example, is a place I went. And a lady stood up, and she said, "I worked as a graphic artist for 12 years and was making X. And I got a little help and went back to my community college and got an associate's degree. And then I went to work," she said, "for a computer company"—and made more in her first year in her new job than she had made in her 12th year in her old job.

In other words, what I'm telling you is, education will enhance somebody's productivity, which enhances their pay.

So to answer your question, for 4-year colleges, help at the Federal level is up. But for 2-year colleges, we've got specific programs aimed at helping, whether they be these youngsters or displaced workers or older workers, to gain skills to fill new jobs in areas such as high tech or health care. There are jobs available in America. The thing we've got to do is to be able to match the worker with the job. And a great place to do so is the community college.

Listen, thanks for being here. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to former professional basketball player Chris Dudley and his wife, Christine; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks in Seattle, Washington

August 13, 2004

It's my honor to come to this vital and important United States manufacturing company. Boeing is a great name in American industry. Not only does Boeing make a great product; the Boeing Company has got great workers. It's been my honor to spend some time with the people who work here, talking about our world, talking about the need for our country to be confident when it comes to world trade.

I assured the folks with whom I was talking that my administration is dedicated to free and fair trade. See, I believe if our country is treated fairly, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

The Boeing Company competes against Airbus, which is a European company. Airbus was founded about 30 years ago and has received, in those 30 years, large Government subsidies from European nations and

continues to receive them. And I think those subsidies are unfair. I think it makes it—it's unfair to this American company that these European Governments continue to subsidize Airbus. And so I informed these good folks who work here that I've instructed U.S. Trade Representative Bob Zoellick to inform European officials in his September meeting that we think these subsidies are unfair and that he should pursue all options to end these subsidies—including bringing a WTO case, if need be. We believe in free trade—we want that free trade to be fair as well. And getting rid of the subsidies of Airbus will make the trade fair, will make the playing field level.

I also want to say something about those residents in Florida. I have been in touch with the Governor and FEMA Director Mike Brown about the—Hurricane Charley that is hitting the coast, the western coast of Florida. Our prayers are with you and your families tonight. We have deployed resources to help. I have declared an emergency, and the process is now in place to aid, provide Federal aid to those who may be affected by this hurricane. And as I repeat, we ask God's blessing on those who were in the path of that hurricane.

I thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:28 p.m. in the Boeing Delivery Center at Boeing Field/King County International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Death of Julia Child

August 13, 2004

Julia Child enriched America with her optimism and enthusiasm for life. She worked with the Office of Strategic Services to protect freedom during World War II. She taught millions to enjoy cooking, and her legacy will continue through her books and videos. She was a pioneer in the early television age who made great strides for women. For her many contributions, she was honored in 2003 with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civil honor. Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to her family and friends.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

August 14, 2004

Good morning. This past week, the Games of the 28th Olympiad began in Athens. Athletes from more than 200 nations gathered at the opening ceremony to watch the lighting of the Olympic torch and to begin 2 weeks of world-class competition.

America is proud of our Olympians. The talented men and women of Team USA represent almost every State and every background and range from 15 to 52 years of age. They are carrying on our Nation's proud Olympic tradition, which extends back to the first modern games, held in Athens in 1896.

In the coming days, more than 500 American athletes will compete in some 28 sports. In stadiums around Athens and in living rooms here at home, millions of fans will cheer for Team USA. We will watch as our athletes set new records and create lasting memories, from the track to the pool to the gymnastics floor. And we will all be proud to see the Stars and Stripes rise when our fellow Americans win medals.

Success in the Olympics is not defined on the medal stand alone. For our athletes, a place on America's team is the culmination of years spent training and competing. They are proving that persistence and teamwork can help meet high goals. They are performing with honor, conducting themselves with humility, and serving as ambassadors of peace and good will to the entire world. By showing respect for every competitor, they are showing America's respect for the world, and they are inspiring us all.

In Greece, the Olympics are returning to their ancient birthplace and also to the birthplace of democracy. These games arrive at a challenging hour for the world, yet we have cause for great hope. At the opening ceremony, Team USA marched alongside men and women from Afghanistan and Iraq, nations that 4 years ago knew only tyranny and repression. Today, because the world acted

with courage and moral clarity, those nations are free, and their athletes are competing in the Olympic Games.

The rise of freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq is transforming life in those nations, and its effect will spread far beyond their borders. For the first time in history, people everywhere will see women competitors wearing the uniform of Afghanistan. For the first time in decades, the world will see Iraqi Olympians free from the brutal punishment of the dictator's son. Twenty-nine athletes from Iraq are competing in Athens including the Iraqi soccer team, which thrilled the world by winning its first game. One woman on the Iraqi track team described her outlook this way: "Someone who represents only herself has accomplished nothing. I want to represent my country."

That same spirit motivates athletes from nations around the world. By coming together in friendly competition, all Olympians are sending the message that freedom and hope are more powerful than terror and despair. As we watch our athletes compete in Athens, we also think about the many Americans deployed overseas to defend our Nation. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, our men and women in uniform are serving with great skill and compassion. They are making America more secure, and America is grateful to all of them and to their families.

I look forward to following the Olympics over the next 2 weeks. I congratulate the coaches and athletes and families of Team USA and also the brave Paralympic athletes preparing to compete in Athens next month. I wish them all good luck in the games.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:40 p.m. on August 13 at the Regent Beverly Wilshire in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Sioux City, Iowa

August 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I've got an interesting line of work, don't I. Yes, it's a line of work where you get introduced by your wife. [*Laughter*] Thankfully, she said yes when I said, "Will you marry me?" What a great First Lady she is, a fabulous mom, and a wonderful wife. I'm going to give you some reasons today why I think you ought to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

We're glad to be in Sioux land, and we thank you all for coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm here traveling this important State to say, there's more to do to make this country a safer, stronger, and better nation for all of our citizens. And I'd like your help. I'd like you to register your friends and neighbors. See, we have an obligation in this free land to vote. And I'd like my supporters to encourage all your citizens to register to vote and to do our duty. And when you get them headed to the polls, you might just tell them, for the sake of a better nation, George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're coming off a swing around the West. It's been a great trip. The crowds are large. The enthusiasm is strong. And there's no doubt in my mind with your help, we will carry Iowa, and we will win a great national victory in 2004.

Tomorrow, I'm going to travel down to Florida to visit with those whose lives have been hurt by Hurricane Charley. I just want them to know that our Federal Government is responding quickly. We have got aid stations in place. FEMA Federal officials are on the ground working with State and local officials. Many lives have been affected by this hurricane. And I know you join me in sending our prayers to those people who look for solace and help.

I'm running with a really good man in Vice President Cheney. Look, I didn't pick him because he's the prettiest guy in—[*laughter*]—I picked him because he can do the job. I picked him for his advice and his sound judgment. And we're ready to go. I'm looking forward to it. There are big differences, and I'm looking forward to making those differences clear to the American people.

I want to thank my friend Congressman Steve King. I appreciate his leadership. I look forward to working with him for 4 more years for the good of this country.

I know the State auditor, David Vaudt, is here. I know the speaker is with us today, Christopher Rants. And I want to thank Ralph Klemme for coming. I want to thank all the State officials who are serving the State of Iowa and those from Nebraska. Those good souls from South Dakota who have come down here. Let me make something clear about South Dakota: John Thune needs to be the United States Senator.

I want to thank the mayor, Dave Ferris, here from Sioux City. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I want to thank my friend Dave Roederer, who is the State campaign chairman for Iowa. He knows what I know; we're going to carry this State.

Backstage, I had the honor of meeting Jeff Fortenberry. He's running for the United States Congress for Nebraska. I want to thank the Blue County band for being here. I appreciate you lending your talents. I thank the All-American Concert Band for being here. Most of all, I want to thank you all for being here. Thanks for taking time out of your weekend to come.

You know, in the past few years, Americans have been through a lot together. These have been hard times. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backwards, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. See, that's the only reason to look backwards, is who best to get the job done for the American people.

I'm asking for the vote, and I'm working hard to ask for the vote because so much is at stake in this election. We have much more to do to move this country forward. I'm running again because I want to work to continue to create jobs and improve our schools. I'm running again because I know we've got to continue to fight the terrorists to secure our homeland. I'm running again to spread the peace. I'm running again—what I'm here to tell you is, we have made much progress, and there is more work to be done.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember, 3½ years ago, there was—when we came to office, too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We have challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We have raised the bar. We believe in accountability because we want to know whether or not our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. We believe in local control of schools. When we find schools that will not teach and will not change, we are bold enough to challenge the status quo.

There's more work to be done. We want our high school diplomas to mean something. We want to intervene early, before it's too late. We want to make sure that technology is in the classrooms so that we can bring high-level training to our kids. We want to emphasize math and science. What I'm telling you is after 4 more years, a rising generation will have skills and confidence necessary to compete in the 21st century.

We have more to do to make quality health care affordable and available. You might remember those Medicare debates. You might remember campaign after campaign, people would travel this State saying, "Don't worry. We'll strengthen Medicare." We got the job done. Drug discount cards that provide real savings are available for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

I was working with—I remember campaigning in this State in 2002. There were a lot of skeptics. People would say, "Well, you know, they talk a good game in Washington." Do you remember what was happening to the rural hospitals of Iowa? Do you remember what it was like when the reimbursement levels didn't support health care

in this important State? I stood up for Charles Grassley, the fine United States Senator from Iowa. I said, "We're going to work together to get the job done," and we got the job done for the people of this State.

We're helping low-income seniors by expanding community health centers. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. We're getting the job done in America for health care, and there's more to do. We want our small businesses to be able to pool across jurisdictional boundaries so they can afford insurance just like big companies are able to do.

In order to make sure you've got health care available and affordable in Iowa and Nebraska and South Dakota, we need medical liability reform now. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We need medical liability reform now.

We will expand research and seek cures for diseases. We will harness technology to reduce costs. And in all we do to improve health care in America, I'll make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

Listen, there's more work to be done to keep our economy strong. We've been through a lot. Think about what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession, corporate scandals, a terror attack; yet we've overcome those obstacles. We've overcome them because our workers are great. We've overcome them because our farmers and ranchers are really good at what they do. We've overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit of this country is really strong. We've overcome it because small businesses are vibrant and healthy and expanding. And we've overcome it because of well-timed tax cuts.

When it came time for providing tax relief, when it came time—which really means just letting you keep more of your own money. Sometimes you hear them in Washington say, "Well, we're going to give them some Government money." [*Laughter*] That's not Government money. No, that's the people's money. That's whose money it is. We said, "If you pay tax, you ought to get relief." It seems like to be the fair way to do things, instead of trying to pick winners and losers. If you're a mom or a dad, you got relief. We increased the child credit. We provided relief from the marriage penalty. I never quite understood a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. It seems like policy ought to encourage marriage in America. We helped our small businesses, and this time, the check actually was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy, since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. This economy is strong. It's getting stronger. We've added about 1.5 million new jobs. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, and right here in the State of Iowa, your unemployment rate is 4.3 percent.

And there's more work to be done. I'm running because I understand that we've got to continue with a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-agricultural policy in order to make sure this economy stays strong and people can find work. You know, when I campaigned before, I said, "Give me a chance, and I'll stay focused on the agricultural economy of America." See, I understand, good agricultural policy is good economic policy for this country.

We passed a good farm bill, and it's working. Farm income is up. Property values are up. Our farmers and ranchers are making a good living, and that's good for the American economy. And we also did something else to help our farm economy, put the death tax on its way to extinction. The problem is, unless you have a President and Congress who understands how devastating the death tax is to our agricultural economy and our small-business economy, it's going to come back to life in 2011. It's going to make it kind of strange in 2010. I believe we ought to get rid of the death tax forever.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in America and people can find work, we need an energy policy which makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's why I am a strong supporter of alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. Someday my hope is that somebody walks

in the Oval Office and plops a report right in front of the President and says, "The corn crop is up, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we must have wise trade policy. See, I believe in free trade, and I believe in fair trade. I believe the job of this administration is to reject economic isolationism and open up markets. One reason the farm economy is high is because not only are our farmers feeding Americans; they're feeding people all around the world.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we need less regulations and less lawsuits against our employers. In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we must not overspend your money, and we must keep your taxes low. And that's an issue in this campaign.

We've still got about 80 days to go in this campaign, and the fellow I'm running against has already made over $2.2 trillion of new promises. And so I said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, don't worry, we'll tax the rich." You've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you? It's why the rich have got accountants—[*laughter*]—figure out how he can't tax them. In order to make sure he fulfills all his promises, guess who is going to pay? You are. But the good news is we're not going to let him get in office in the first place.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running because I know we need to continue with a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer economic agenda to make sure people can find a decent wage in this country and to make sure this country is the strongest economy in the industrialized world.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. Our future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. See, if America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terrorist cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, the terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Government, the Saudi Government, is after Al Qaida. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a clear and strong message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

We looked at intelligence. Not only did we look at the facts, we looked at intelligence as we had it and saw a threat. I knew it was important to bring the Congress in, so I called on Congress to give me its judgment. The Congress remembered the facts and looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. You see, both of us saw a threat—me and the Congress saw a threat—because we remembered one of the lessons of September the 11th was, is that when we saw a threat we must deal with it before it fully materializes. It's a different world we're in. So Members of Congress—like me—saw that lesson and voted overwhelmingly to use force, if necessary, to protect America. Members of

both political parties looked at the intelligence and made that declaration. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion I did.

I then went to the United Nations. See, I do think it's important always to have war as the last resort and that we must try diplomacy as first resort in order to bring the peace. So I went to the U.N. They agreed with our assessment that Saddam Hussein was a threat. You might remember they voted overwhelmingly in the U.N. Security Council to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose. Disarm, or face serious consequences."

As he had for over a decade—he didn't care what the free world said. Remember, he defied the world, resolution after resolution after resolution. He did so again. As a matter of fact, when we sent inspectors in to find out the facts, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, you need to remember that Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. And that's not a risk, after September the 11th, that we could afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam is in a prison cell.

Now—and now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and about 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. [*Laughter*] He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. And I want to thank Senator Kerry for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] Although, I caution you, there are still 80 days left where he could change his mind again.

I'm running because I know we must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. In this post-9/11 world, we cannot simply hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them and defeat them in foreign lands so we do not have to face them here at home.

During the next 4 years, America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us in the pursuit of the terrorists and to spread peace. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I really appreciate the moms and dads in those countries who share the same sacrifices that the moms and dads and husbands and wives in our country share, knowing a loved one is serving a noble cause during historic times. I will continue to build alliances and strengthen alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

These are crucial time. They're crucial times, and we're doing the hard work to secure our country and to spread peace. And our commitments are being kept by our men and women of the military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting such a good example to those who wear the uniform today. I appreciate you all coming.

I've had the privilege of traveling to bases in our country and around the world. I've met those—with those who defend our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And those who wear our uniform deserve the full support of our Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel,

spare parts. I appreciated the bipartisan support my request received in the House and the Senate. It was a strong support in the United States Senate. As a matter of fact, only a small, what I would call, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 voted against the funding, and 2 of those 12 are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember his initial explanation. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That doesn't sound like the way people in Sioux land talk. The pressure got on a little bit about that vote. Then he said, well, he's proud of the vote, and he went on to say the whole thing is a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. These are historic times. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. See, Americans believe that peaceful societies emerge when governments listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. In Iraq and Afghanistan, there are strong leaders who have emerged who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people.

Success in Iraq will be achieved when more Iraqis are trained to defeat those who want to stop the advance of freedom. Our job is to stand with the Government that is heading toward elections and preparing the Iraqis for a day of security and freedom. That's what we're doing in Iraq.

And it's important work. It's important work because by serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and we're making our own country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. Free countries are peaceful countries. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving our deepest ideals as Americans. We believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Let me share a story with you right quick, tell you what I'm talking about. Laura and I were having dinner with Prime Minister of Japan, and—Prime Minister Koizumi—in Tokyo. And we're talking, and during the course of the conversation, it dawned on me that it's really interesting that I was having a meeting with the leader of a former enemy. My dad fought in World War II. Many of your dads fought against the Japanese, and here we were sitting down to dinner. What was remarkable about the conversation is, we were talking about how to keep the peace.

Fortunately, my predecessor and others in our Government after World War II believed in the power of liberty to transform enemies into allies and friends. They believed that liberty had the capacity to take a former enemy and help them become a peaceful advocate for freedom, and that's what happened. And fortunately, they defied the pessimists. They didn't listen to the doubters. They didn't listen to the naysayers. They held deep in their hearts this conviction that we hold in America that freedom is a right of people all around the world, and freedom is an amazingly powerful, transforming philosophy.

And so we were talking about the peace. We were talking about how to deal with North Korea, as allies in peace. Someday, when we complete our mission, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, saying to himself or herself, thank God America didn't forget its values, and they'll be talking about how to keep the peace.

We have more work to do. We have more work to do to protect our country. There's enemies who hate us. They still plot to harm us. You know, there's a debate about the course of action I've taken. They say—he says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I strongly disagree with that. There's obviously a clear difference of opinion. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the nature of the enemy. I want you to remember, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. I don't think they need an excuse for their hatred and their evil hearts. You do not create terrorists by fighting back; you defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're reforming how we protect our homeland. It's hard work to reform how you

protect your homeland. It's hard work to reform at all in Washington—a lot of entrenched interests there. But we're making progress. You just need to know there's a lot of really good people working hard on your behalf to find terrorists before they can hurt us. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act. Listen, the PATRIOT Act is a vital piece of legislation which gives our law enforcement the tools necessary to crack these terrorist networks. And they do so without compromising your constitutional rights as an American. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before. We're taking action on a large majority of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, which I found to be a very helpful report and a good report.

We've got more to do to secure our ports and borders and to train our first-responders and dramatically improve intelligence-gathering capability. When Congress comes back in, we'll continue to work with them on the National Intelligence Director, so one person is in charge of coordinating intelligence overseas and at home. We're working hard. A lot of people are working hard, and I'm proud to be associated with great people at the Federal level and at the State level and the first-responders here at the local level who are doing their duty to the American citizens—for the American citizens.

I told you reform is hard. It's easy to advocate it in Washington, but you have to get the job done. When you're out campaigning and rounding up the voters, remind them, when it comes to reforming public schools and improving education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms and giving families more access and more choices in health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to a strong agricultural economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to growing our economy and creating quality jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to securing our Nation and spreading the peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put a man in there who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. These are exciting times we live in, and they're a time of change. And I think one of the ways that Government can help people during a time of change is to encourage an ownership society. We want more people owning their own health care accounts, so that if they change jobs, they can take the health care accounts with them. We want—look, I've got to tell you, I'm concerned about Social Security. For old guys like me, Social Security is fine. [*Laughter*] It's for the younger workers, those who are just starting to work, we've got to worry about the fiscal solvency of the Social Security system. That's why I believe we ought to allow younger workers to own their own personal retirement account in Social Security.

I love the fact, in a changing world, more people own their own home. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. There's nothing better than thinking about somebody opening a door, say, "Welcome to my home. Come into my piece of property." You know, the entrepreneurial sector of America is strong and vibrant. More people are owning their own business. The reason I believe in an ownership society is not only to provide stability during changing times, I also understand that if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

During changing times, though, there are some things that won't change, our belief in liberty, opportunity, and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. Individual values we try to live by won't change, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. By the way, these institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life, in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, you know, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got

a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. Listen, if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in Sioux City, Iowa, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

No, I understand the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. Compassion* happens when a loving neighbor puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you," and "Can I help you?" I will continue to rally the armies of compassion so that we change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of nations when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is the times where we need firm resolve and clear vision, strong belief in the values that make us such a wonderful country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day that I'll never forget. Amidst all the scenes in my memory that day, a couple stand out—the workers in hardhats that were chanting, "Whatever it takes." I was working the rope line. A guy grabs me. His eyes were bloodshot. He says, "Do not let me down." I remember meeting with the victims' families who had this great hope of all hopes that somehow a loved one who had rushed in the rubble to save life would still be alive. All of us there took that day personally. I took it personally. I know you took it personally.

I have a duty that goes on. Every day that I wake up, I think of best how to defend our country. I will never relent. I will stay firm in my desire to bring justice to the enemies, to keep America safe and secure, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot. We've come through a lot together, and we've done hard work and important work. But there's more to be done. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a young generation. We'll stay focused and firm in our resolve to secure America and to spread the peace.

You know, when I campaigned through your State in 2004, I said that if I had the high honor of holding this office, I would pledge to you that I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office of the Presidency. And with your help, during the next 4 years, I will continue to do so.

May God bless you all. Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. at the Tyson Events Center. In his remarks, he referred to Iowa State Auditor David A. Vaudt; Speaker Christopher Rants and State Representative Ralph Klemme, Iowa House of Representatives; former Representative John R. Thune, senatorial candidate in South Dakota; Mayor Dave Ferris of Sioux City, IA; Jeff Fortenberry, candidate for Congress in Nebraska's First Congressional District; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks on the Devastation of Hurricane Charley and an Exchange With Reporters in Punta Gorda, Florida

August 15, 2004

The President. The job of the Federal Government and the State Government is to surge resources as quickly as possible to disaster areas. And that's exactly what's happening now. We choppered over and saw the devastation of this area. A lot of people's lives are turned upside down. We've got ice and

* White House correction.

water moving in, trailers for people to live in are moving in. State is providing security so that people can have peace of mind that their neighborhoods will be safe. There's a lot of compassion moving in the area. The Red Cross is here.

What I'm telling is that there's a lot of help moving into this part of the world. It's going to take a while to rebuild it. But the Government's job is to help people help rebuild their lives, and that's what's happening.

The coordination between the Federal Government and the State government and the local government is really important. I think it's excellent now. The Governor can speak to that, if you like. But it's really important that when we say we're going to do something, that it actually happens. And that's what we're following through on now.

I'll answer some questions, if you've got some.

Community Response

Q. Can you tell us about some of the people who you spoke with and what they told you?

The President. Well, I've got—you know, these good folks here—this is this man's house here. His parents were uprooted from where they were living. They came here to spend the night. And that's what you're beginning to see. You're beginning to see neighbors helping neighbors. A lot of people who have been dislocated are staying with a friend or a neighbor. You know, out of these catastrophes the spirit of America really shines, and that spirit is neighbor helping neighbor. So that's the lesson here.

The fellow down the street came out okay; he had taken precautions necessary. Nearly everybody here that I've talked to had evacuated, as the State asked them to do, and therefore, the loss of life was minimized. Still, too many people lost their lives, but nevertheless, it was not as significant as it could have been. We're here, now, obviously, in a residential neighborhood where people's lives have been destroyed. They're beginning to worry about insurance claims, and the State is organized to handle insurance claims. The key is just to make sure that they expedite the services which are available as quickly as possible.

Federal Response

Q. There was some consternation after Andrew that the Federal aid didn't arrive soon enough. Can you promise that there will be a more expeditious response this time?

The President. It's happening now——

Q. Sir——

The President. Hold up for a second. We're moving a lot of aid very quickly, and again, you can ask the Governor whether or not he's satisfied with how fast the aid is moving. All I can tell you is that FEMA was on the ground yesterday morning, and there's a lot of supplies surging this way.

Yes, ma'am.

Estimates of Damage

Q. Have you gotten an updated tally of the cost of the damage——

The President. Not yet. Jeb estimated billions. We'll see.

President's Visit

Q. Mr. President, some people are going to say that there's a political component to your rapid visit to Florida.

The President. Yes, and if I didn't come they would have said, "He should have been here more rapidly."

Q. Yes. [*Laughter*]

Federal Response

Q. What about what happened in '92, with Hurricane Andrew? That was obviously in August of a Presidential——

The President. That was then; this is now. And the Government is set up to respond very quickly, and we are.

Q. Was there a lesson learned back then, though?

The President. The lesson is, respond quickly. And we are responding quickly. And we're surging equipment. And the coordination between the Federal Government and the State Government is excellent. And the Homeland Security Department is doing its job. FEMA Director Brown is doing an excellent job. You can talk to the Governor. He can give you a sense for—from the State perspective. But from the Federal perspective, I was notified that they're going to move as quickly as possible, and they are. A lot of stuff is coming. And thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:46 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio

August 16, 2004

Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. And thanks for inviting me for your 105th national convention. I'm proud to be here.

One of the great honors of being Commander in Chief is meeting the courageous men and women who stand watch for freedom. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to look them in the eye and say on behalf of our country, "Thank you for your service." The same is true of each of you here today. When the enemies of freedom were on the march and our country and the world needed brave Americans to take up arms and stop their advance, you stepped forward to serve. And today I'm proud to stand before you as Commander in Chief, look you in the eye, and say, America thanks you for your service.

I want to thank Ed Banas for his service in being an effective commander of the VFW. I appreciate the job he's done, and I want to thank his wife, Sandra, for standing by his side during this important time for the VFW. Ed, thank you, sir, for your service. I also thank my friend Bob Wallace, the executive director of the VFW.

I want to thank Governor Bob Taft for joining us today, from the State of Ohio; my friend Tony Principi—I'll say something about him here in a minute; and Congressman Rob Portman, Congressman from Ohio, is with us as well. I'm honored that these elected officials—and in Principi's case, appointed official—is with us today.

I want to thank John Furgess, the incoming VFW national commander in chief, and Alma. I want to thank Evelyn McCune, the VFW Ladies Auxiliary national president, and her husband, Don. I want to thank Jo-Anne Ott. I want to thank the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members for letting me come and address you.

In the audience today are two people I've gotten to know during a very traumatic period during their lives. Carolyn and Keith Maupin are with us today. They're from this part of the world. Their son, Matt, has been missing in action for 4 months in Iraq. I have vowed to them we will do everything we can to find their loved one, Matt. I appreciate their courage. I continue to send my prayers to these two fine Americans during these difficult times for them. May God bless you, Keith and Carolyn.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars have always stood up for our Nation and those who wear the uniform. Since your founding in 1899, the members of the VFW have been serving the men and women who served America. I appreciate your dedication. The VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary are volunteering by transporting sick and disabled vets to and from their medical appointments. You're showing great compassion. You're supporting the men and women who serve today. Some 1,500 VFW posts have adopted military units deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other distant theaters. You've distributed more than 3.5 million prepaid calling cards to our deployed forces. You've sent thousands of care packages to our troops in the field. You've helped the families back home with groceries and home repairs and other necessities. America respects our military and their families. I thank you for showing that respect every day.

All our Nation's veterans have made serving America the highest priority of their lives, and serving our veterans is one of the highest priorities of my administration. To make sure my administration fulfills the commitments I have made to America's veterans, I selected one of the finest men ever to serve as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a combat-decorated Vietnam veteran, Secretary Tony Principi.

Thanks in large part to Tony's leadership, my administration has a solid record of accomplishment for our veterans. When my 2005 budget is approved by Congress, we will have increased overall funding for our Nation's veterans by almost $20 billion or 40 percent since 2001. We have increased funding for our veterans more in 4 years than the previous administration did in 8 years. To provide health care to veterans, we've increased VA medical care funding by 41 percent over the past 4 years.

We are bringing care to more veterans more quickly. Since 2001, we've enrolled 2.5 million more veterans in health care services. We've increased outpatient visits from 44 million to 54 million. We've increased the number of prescriptions filled from 98 million to 116 million. We're getting the job done. We've reduced the large backlog of disability claims by about a third. We will reduce it even further. We've cut the average time it takes to process disability claims by 70 days.

We have focused resources on the veterans who need it most, those with service-related disabilities and low incomes and special needs. We've established a new scheduling system to make certain that veterans seeking care for a service-connected condition are first in line. For more than a century, Federal law prohibited disabled veterans from receiving both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. Combat-injured and severely disabled veterans deserve better. I was proud to be the first President in over 100 years to sign concurrent receipt legislation. We're getting the job done in Washington, DC.

My administration has launched a $35 million program to provide housing and health care and other support services to homeless veterans. No veteran who served in the blazing heat or bitter cold of foreign lands should have to live without shelter, exposed to the elements, in the very country whose freedom they fought for.

We are modernizing VA health centers and building new ones, especially in the South and West, where increasing numbers of our veterans live. Since 2001, we have opened 194 new community-based clinics nationwide. And through the CARES initiative, we are providing $1 billion—and have requested another half-billion for next year—to modernize VA facilities and to provide better care for veterans in areas where the need is growing, including here in Ohio. Our VA hospitals are, on average, 50 years old. That's why we are modernizing our facilities to make sure our veterans have 21st century health care. For example, here in Ohio, we're building one of the largest new VA clinics in America in Columbus, Ohio. We're spending more than $100 million to consolidate two VA hospitals in Cleveland into a single 21st century facility. When it comes to providing first-class care for our Nation's veterans, we are getting the job done.

Our Nation's debt extends not just to the veterans who served but to the families who supported them in war and depend on them today. Last December, I signed the Veterans Benefits Act, authorizing $1 billion in new and expanded benefits for disabled veterans and surviving spouses and their children.

America's veterans have defended America in hours of need. And to honor the veterans from the Second World War for their service to our country, the World War II Memorial now stands on the Washington Mall. And I thank you for your efforts and your hard work to get this memorial built. And we honor all of those here today who fought to defend freedom in the Second World War.

Like the Second World War, the war we face today began with a ruthless surprise attack on America. The world changed on that September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terrorist cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy; Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror; Afghanistan is now a place where many young girls get to go to school for the first time. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a clear and strong message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th, a lesson this Nation must never forget, is that we must deal with threats before they fully materialize. I remembered what Saddam Hussein was like; I looked at the intelligence. I called upon Congress to remember his history and look at the intelligence. I thought it was important to bring Congress—get their opinion on the subject of Saddam Hussein. So members of both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion that I came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. I went to the United Nations. The U.N. Security Council looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat. As a matter of fact, they passed a resolution, 15 to nothing, which said to Saddam, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for the past 12 years, he refused to comply. He ignored the demands of the free world. He systematically deceived the weapons inspectors.

So I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action to defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemy, to the terrorists. It is not a risk, after September the 11th, that we could afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

We have more hard work to do. I'll continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them and defeat them in foreign lands, so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us pursue the terrorists and spread the peace. There are over 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate the sacrifices of the mothers and fathers from those countries, to have their sons and daughters stand with our troops to spread freedom and peace. I'll continue to build on those alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. We'll help them become peaceful and democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders; they're on the path to elections. We set a clear goal that Iraq and Afghanistan will be peaceful and democratic countries that are allies in the war on terror. We'll meet that goal by helping secure their countries, allowing a peaceful political process to develop, and by training Afghan and Iraqi forces so they can make the hard decisions, so they can defend their country against those who are preventing the spread of freedom. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

It's important we send the right signals when we speak here in America. The other day, my opponent said if he's elected, the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. I think it sends the wrong signal. It sends the wrong signal to the enemy; they could easily wait 6 months and 1 day. It sends the wrong message to our troops, that completing the mission may not be necessary. It sends the wrong message to the Iraqi people who wonder whether or not America means what it says. Our friends and allies must know that when America speaks, we mean what we say. We will stay until the job is completed.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful and examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. You see, by serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace. Free countries do not export terror. Free

countries are peaceful countries. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of America. We believe that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

These are crucial times. We have an historic opportunity to win the war on terror by spreading freedom and peace. Our commitments are being kept by the men and women of our military. I've had the privilege of traveling to bases around our country and around the world. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

Those who wear our uniform deserve the full support of our Government. For almost 4 years, my administration has strengthened our military. We have enacted the largest increases in defense spending since Ronald Reagan served as the Commander in Chief. We've increased military pay by 21 percent. We have provided better housing and better training and better maintenance.

And last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I wanted to make sure they had the very best, so I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. The VFW strongly supported my request. I thank you for standing up for our troops. Your work on Capitol Hill paid off. After all, the funding received strong bipartisan support—so strong that in the United States Senate, only 12 Members voted against the funding, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

When pressed, he explained his vote, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] He went on to say he was proud of the vote and the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We have more work to do to defend freedom and protect our country. We will ensure that our forces are well-prepared and well-positioned to meet the threats of the future. Our Armed Forces have changed a lot. They're more agile and more lethal. They're better able to strike anywhere in the world over great distances on short notice. Yet for decades, Americans' Armed Forces abroad have essentially remained where the wars of the last century ended, in Europe and in Asia. America's current force posture was designed, for example, to protect us and our allies from Soviet aggression. The threat no longer exists.

More than 3 years ago, we launched a comprehensive review of America's global force posture, the numbers, types, locations, and capabilities of U.S. forces around the world. We've consulted closely with our allies and with Congress. We've examined the challenges posed by today's threats and emerging threats. And so, today I announce a new plan for deploying America's Armed Forces.

Over the coming decade, we'll deploy a more agile and more flexible force, which means that more of our troops will be stationed and deployed from here at home. We will move some of our troops and capability to new locations, so they can surge quickly to deal with unexpected threats. We'll take advantage of 21st century military technologies to rapidly deploy increased combat power.

The new plan will help us fight and win these wars of the 21st century. It will strengthen our alliances around the world, while we build new partnerships to better preserve the peace. It will reduce the stress on our troops and our military families. Although we'll still have a significant presence overseas, under the plan I'm announcing today, over the next 10 years, we will bring home about 60,000 to 70,000 uniformed personnel and about 100,000 members and civilian employees—family members and civilian employees.

See, our servicemembers will have more time on the homefront and more predictability and fewer moves over a career. Our military spouses will have fewer job changes, greater stability, more time for their kids and to spend time with their families at home. The taxpayers will save money as we configure our military to meet the threats of the

21st century. There will be savings as we consolidate and close bases and facilities overseas no longer needed to face the threats of our time and defend the peace.

The world has changed a great deal, and our posture must change with it, for the sake of our military families, for the sake of our taxpayers, and so we can be more effective at projecting our strength and spreading freedom and peace.

Today, our troops have the most advanced technologies at their disposal. Weapons are more lethal, more precise than were available for you. Our troops are more mobile. They can communicate better. Yet their success in the wars we fight is being made possible by the same things that made your success possible, personal courage, love of country, dedication to duty.

As our troops fight today in Baghdad, in Najaf, in the Hindu Kush mountains, and elsewhere, I know America's veterans feel a special pride in them. They're carrying on your legacy of sacrifice and service. They're determined to see the mission through. This country stands with them.

I want to thank you for the example you have set for our men and women in uniform. I want to thank you for your idealism, for your dedication to God and our country. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at the Dr. Albert B. Sabin Cincinnati Cinergy Center. In his remarks, he referred to Edward S. Banas, Sr., commander in chief, Bob Wallace, Washington Office executive director, and John Furgess, senior vice commander in chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Evelyn McCune, national president, and JoAnne Ott, national senior vice president, Ladies Auxiliary VFW. He also referred to the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) initiative of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Remarks in Traverse City, Michigan

August 16, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Boy, I'm glad to be here. This is a beautiful part of our country. It turns out I'm the first sitting President to come up here since Gerald Ford was the President. Good to be here in cherry country. Today it looks like Bush-Cheney country too.

I'm looking forward to this race. I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come out and ask for the vote. I'm traveling your important State asking for the vote. You got some big differences in this campaign. One of them is that my opponent thinks you can find the heart and soul in Hollywood. I think you find it right here in Traverse City, Michigan.

We're going to be spending a lot of time in your important State, and there's no doubt, with your help, we'll carry Michigan, and we'll win in November of '04.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience member. We love you, Laura!

The President. Yes. She is a fantastic mom, a great wife. Listen, I'm going to give you a lot of reasons to be for me, but perhaps the most important one is to keep Laura as the First Lady for 4 more years.

And I'm running with a good man in Vice President Dick Cheney. I admit it—I admit it, he is not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank my friend Dave Camp, the Congressman from up here in northern Michigan. What a good man. I'm proud to work with him—good, honorable man. I want to thank Congressman Nick Smith for being here as well. Nick, I appreciate you coming. I appreciate Trick Pony, the band that was playing here. I'm glad they're here. It's good of them to come.

Listen, I want to thank Betsy DeVos and all the grassroots activists. Let me tell you, grassroots activists are the people that put up the signs, make the phone calls, register the voters. We have a duty in this country to vote. We have an obligation to do our duty to show up at the polls. Do you realize, over 9 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan? These people have got a taste of freedom, and they're showing up to vote. And so—our fellow citizens—so I urge you to register people. Head people to the polls,

and when you get them headed there, just tell them this country is going to be safer, stronger, and better with George Bush and Dick Cheney.

You know, we've been through a lot together. In these past few years, Americans have been through a lot and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead this Nation forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have so much more to do to move this country forward. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made much progress, and we have much more work to do.

We have more to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember the mindset 3½ years ago, when we just shuffled children from grade to grade, year after year, and they didn't learn the basics. I went to Washington for a reason. We challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We're now measuring in return for extra Federal help, because we want to know whether or not our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract.

We believe in local control of schools, and we're willing to challenge the status quo when we find schools that will not teach and will not change. We're doing the hard work. When it comes to reforming our schools, there's more work to do. We're going to reform our high schools to make sure the high school diploma means something. We're going to expand math and science education so our young people can compete in the high-tech world. We'll expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into the classrooms. With 4 more years, we'll help a rising generation of Americans gain the skill and the confidence necessary to realize the great American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. You might remember all the old Medicare debates. Year after year, they'd come up here and tell you, "Don't worry. I'll get something done." We got the job done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards, which provide real savings for our seniors. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose the plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

There's more to do. We've expanded community health centers, and we'll continue to do so for low-income Americans. We want people getting their primary care in these centers and not in our emergency rooms in our hospitals. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choice, more opportunity in health care, we're getting the job done, but there's more work to be done. Most Americans get their health care through their businesses. Most new jobs are created by small businesses, and a lot of small businesses have trouble providing health care for their employees. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to gather together to purchase insurance at discounts just like big companies get to do.

I'll tell you what else we need to do. We must end the frivolous lawsuits that run up the cost of health care. You cannot be—you can't be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now.

We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care for America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We've got more to do to make this economy stronger. Listen, we've come through a lot together. Think about what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through terrorist attacks. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a stock market decline. We've overcome these obstacles because of the hard work of America's entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners and workers. We've come through a lot.

We've also come through it because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't pick winners or losers. We did it the fair way. If you pay tax, you get relief. We helped our families by raising the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. I mean, what kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? We ought to be encouraging marriage in America. We helped the small businesses. And this time, the check actually was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown as a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, Americans added about 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The national unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent.

Listen, I fully understand we face challenges in some of our manufacturing communities. In some parts of Michigan, the recovery has lagged, but there are good signs. This economy is strong. It's getting stronger. We will not rest until anybody who wants to work can find a job.

I've got a strategy to make sure good jobs stay here in America. To make sure the jobs are here, our regulations need to be reasonable and fair. Some of you fill out paperwork—I can't promise you whether anybody has ever read it in Government. [*Laughter*] To keep jobs in America, we need tort reform. To keep jobs in America, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To keep jobs in America, we must be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

We've got only 2 months left in the campaign, but the fellow I'm running against already has made about $2.2 trillion of new spending promises. No telling what's going to happen when we come down the stretch. So they said the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'll just tax the rich." You've heard that talk before, haven't you? The rich hires accountants, and guess who gets stuck with the tab? You do. But we're not going to let him win, are we?

In order to keep jobs here, we'll insist on a level playing field when it comes to trade. Listen, we want Traverse City cherries being sold and purchased all around the world. We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anyplace, so long as the rules are fair. We want our farmers not only feeding Americans, but we want them feeding hungry mouths all across the globe. Farm income is up, and one of the reasons it's up is because of exports of agricultural products are on the rise, and I intend to keep it that way.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow, we've got to use our resources wisely, like water. It starts with keeping the Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes Basin. You might remember what my opponent said earlier this year about Great Lakes water diversion. He said it would be a delicate balancing act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It sounds just like him. [*Laughter*] My position is clear: We're never going to allow diversion of Great Lakes water.

I've got another position that's clear. We're spending money—Federal money to help clean up contaminated sediment in Lake Michigan and Superior, Erie and Huron, and Ontario. We want to make sure our natural resources are well preserved.

Give me 4 more years, and this economy will still be the greatest of any industrialized nation in the world. Our farmers will be doing well. Small businesses will be vibrant, and people will be able to find high-paying, good jobs.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If we show uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Prior to September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers who set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Many young girls now go to school for the first time. America and the world are better off.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message—[*laughter*]—the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world, firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors, and he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

After September the 11th, we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. It is a vital lesson our country must never forget. It's one of the lessons of that terrible day. So I took the threat seriously. I went to the United States Congress and said, "I see a threat. Why don't you take the matter up." They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered the history I remember. And members of both political parties, including my opponent, came to the same conclusion that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

Diplomacy is important, and so I went to the United Nations, again. They looked at the intelligence, and they unanimously concluded, in the U.N. Security Council, that Saddam Hussein was a threat and that he must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the free world. He had no intention of listening to those resolutions. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors that the world sent in. So I had a choice to make at that point in history. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, remember that Saddam had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to others, our enemies. And after September the 11th, that is a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam is in a prison cell.

And now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank the Senator for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] But I want to remind you, there's still 78 days for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

I'm running because I understand clearly there's more work to be done to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with these killers. You must not hope for the best. We will engage these enemies around the world, so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help defeat the terrorists. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I know you agree with me when I send my appreciation to the mothers and dads of the soldiers from those countries, who stand side by side with our soldiers to bring freedom and peace to the world. And I will continue to build our alliances and work with our friends to spread peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across our country and around the world, I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear our uniform. I've seen their great decency. Today I met Petty Officer 3d Class Joel Oliver. He's from here.

He was standing back there. He told me he served in the Navy, and he said something really interesting—when he'd come back from Iraq, he said, "This is a great time to serve. I was actually a part of history." He is a part of history. He's a part of spreading freedom and peace. I appreciate his service, and I appreciate the service of all who wear the uniform.

And I have made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones. They will have the full support of Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This money is for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts for our military. It was necessary money. And my request received strong bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. As a matter of fact, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how he tried to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I suspect not a lot of people talk like that up here. [*Laughter*] I expect the people up here like the plain-spoken fellow. He got pressed a little further on that vote. He said he was proud of his vote. Then he said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries believe in peace.

Those are the lessons we learned after World War II. After all, one of my strongest allies in peace is the Prime Minister of Japan. Think about that. I'm talking about how to keep the peace—the man who runs a country that my dad fought against in World War II, and your dads did as well. And yet, we sit at the table and talk about peace. Listen, liberty can change attitudes. That's what Americans believe.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we bring hope to others, and that makes us more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the precious peace. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of the American soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There are enemies who hate us, and they're still plotting to harm us. We have a difference of opinion about the nature of the enemy. The other day, my opponent said that going to war with terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I—the logic is upside-down, as far as I'm concerned. So is the misunderstanding of the enemy. See, during the 1990s——

Audience member. Louder! Louder!

The President. ——the terrorists—[*laughter*]—during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It is wrong to blame America for the evil in the hearts of these killers. We do not create terrorists by fighting back; we defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

I agree with the conclusion of the 9/11 Commission when it said, the actions we've taken since September the 11th has made us safer but not yet safe enough. I understand that. You've just got to know, there's a lot of good people working hard to protect our homeland. We've created the Department of Homeland Security. We're communicating better than ever before. Intelligence sharing between domestic and foreign agencies are—is seamless and good. The PATRIOT Act is a vital part of the defense of America. Our law enforcement officers need to have the tools necessary to defend you. I'm looking forward to working with Congress to create the position of National Intelligence Director so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and at home.

There's more work to do—there's more work to do. But reform is never easy, particularly in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests up there. People are willing to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to get the job done.

I'd like for you to remind your friends and neighbors, when it came to reforming schools and providing an excellent education for all our children, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms to give our families more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and overcoming obstacles so people can find work, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland and defeating the terrorists and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And when it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in there who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. You know, we're living in exciting times. It's a time of change, and that can unsettle people. I understand that. But one way to help people during a time of change is to have Government encourage an ownership society. We want people owning their own health care accounts so if they change jobs, they can take it from job to job. If you're a younger worker, I'm a little concerned about the fiscal stability of Social Security. For old guys like me, we're doing okay when it comes to Social Security. But if you're younger, why don't you join me in advocating for personal retirement accounts that you can call your own.

In a changing world, it's a fantastic thought to know that homeownership rates in America are at an alltime high. I love the idea of somebody opening their door and saying, "Welcome to my home. This is my piece of property." We want more people owning their own small business. We're going to continue to advocate an ownership society because we understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In these changing times, there are some things that will not change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the individual values we try to live by—courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose—our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like family and marriage, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench. That's why I named Judge Rick Griffin to the Federal courts. He's right from here. He's a good, honest fellow. The problem is, people like my opponent are playing politics with the judicial system on the Floor of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Rick needs an up-or-down vote in order to make sure these courts in this part of the world are able to function like you want them to. Stop playing politics with American justice.

We're making—we stand for a culture of responsibility in America, and we're making progress. See, this culture of ours is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "You've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years because I want to continue to rally the armies of compassion. See, Government can hand out money, but it can't put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody who needs help, and says, "I love you," and "What can I do to help you?" I know by rallying the armies of

compassion we can change America, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, strong belief in the values that have made us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day I will never forget. I will never forget the workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I was working the ropelines saying thanks to people, and a fellow with bloodshot eyes—he had just come out of the rubble, searching for one of his buddies—said, "Do not let down." He took that day personally. Everybody on that site took it personally. I know you took it personally, and so do I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day thinking how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country—I mean, every corner. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State and our great country asking for the vote, and I made a pledge that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected, so help me God. With your help, I will continue to do so for 4 more years.

Thank you for coming. Thank you all. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:16 p.m. at the Grand Traverse County Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Richard A. Griffin, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Proclamation 7805—National Airborne Day, 2004

August 16, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans look to the members of our Armed Forces as examples of honor and patriotism. On National Airborne Day, we commemorate the first official Army parachute jump on August 16, 1940, and salute a distinguished group of individuals whose courage and dedication have earned them a cherished place in American history.

Our Nation's Airborne forces have helped liberate millions from oppression and extend peace and freedom around the world. From the initial tests of this new medium of warfare, to the establishment of venerable units serving today, these brave men and women have expanded the vision and capabilities of our Armed Forces. The Army designated the first Airborne division on August 15, 1942, and the 82nd Airborne Division set the standard for achievement and built a proud legacy of service. Many units followed in their footsteps, fighting bravely in battle and serving our country with distinction in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and other critical missions.

Today's Airborne forces continue the tradition of excellence and determination as we fight the global war on terror. In Afghanistan and Iraq, they have helped advance peace and democracy and defended the American people from danger. We are grateful for their service and continue to stand solidly behind the men and women of our Airborne forces, and all those in our military, as they serve on the front lines of freedom.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim August 16, 2004, as National Airborne Day. I encourage all Americans to join me in honoring those who have served in the Airborne forces. I call

upon all citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:52 a.m., August 17, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on August 18.

Remarks to Boeing Company Employees in Ridley Park, Pennsylvania

August 17, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Gosh, it's good to be here.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. I am honored to be here. Weldon is right, I'm here to thank the employees of this important plant for giving our troops what is necessary to keep the country safe.

I appreciate the tour I just had. I want to thank Mark Madden. I appreciate Johnny D. If you don't know who Johnny D is, he's the president of Local 1069. He kindly came off vacation to say hi to the President. [*Laughter*] I was proud he did.

I'm equally as proud of the men and women who work here, working day and night to put out a good product on behalf of our country. This is a great plant because we've got great workers.

You know, this is my 32d visit to your State since I've been President. A lot of people are wondering why I'm coming so much. It ought to be obvious to you. I like my cheesesteak "whiz with." I also want to win Pennsylvania. I'm coming to this State and asking people for the vote. I've got more to do to work with our country to keep us safer, stronger, and better.

We've done a lot. We've been through a lot together, but there's more work to do to realize the great promise of this country and to keep our country as secure as it possibly can be. With your help, we'll carry Pennsylvania. With your help, we're going to win in November of 2004.

Laura sends her best. She's terrific. She's heading out to Colorado. She's campaigning, which is good news for me. [*Laughter*] She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. Let's put me back in there so she can have 4 more years as the First Lady. I love her dearly.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I admit he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] Yes. I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because of his judgment, his ability to get the job done.

I appreciate my friend Curt Weldon. He's right, he wasn't exaggerating. We were campaigning somewhere in this part of the world, and he said, "We need to go over there and thank the workers." I said, "Fine. Set it up." He said, "Your schedule is harder to get through than mine." But here I am. And I want to thank Curt for setting up this visit. I appreciate his leadership and his friendship. He's doing a fine job for the people of Pennsylvania.

I want to thank the president and the CEO of Boeing Company, Harry Stonecipher, for being here. I'm honored you're here, Harry. I want to thank Bill Hunt. He's a senior manager of the Chinook 47 operations. I want to thank all of the employees and families who are here. Thanks for coming by to say hello. I'm honored to be here. I appreciate you taking interest in the political process.

You know, we all have a duty to do in our democratic system. We all have the obligation to vote. Obviously, when people start heading to the polls, I've got a preference. [*Laughter*] But I do want everybody in this country to vote. And for those of you who are involved in grassroots politics, I want to thank you for encouraging your fellow citizens to go to the polls.

I'm on the ticket with Arlen Specter. He's a fine United States Senator. I'm proud to have his support and friendship. I appreciate my friend Jim Greenwood. Jim has served this part of the State with great skill, and we're going to miss him in the House of Representatives. I appreciate you coming, Jim. I'm honored you're here. I appreciate Mike Castle. He snuck across the border from

Delaware. [*Applause*] Either others snuck across the border with you, or they know you here. [*Laughter*] Castle is a good man, a good, honest fellow. I appreciate working with him. I know the statehouse speaker is with us, a lot of local officials. Thank you all for coming.

I first want to thank the veterans who are here. I know a lot of veterans work in this facility and are in this crowd. I'm honored you're here. I want to tell you what I told the VFW yesterday is, thanks for setting such a good example for the folks who wear the uniform today. I appreciate the high standards our veterans have set.

I also reminded them that just like the wars of the past, we have got to stay dedicated, focused, and resolved. We're once again fighting deadly enemies, and we're depending on the people here at Ridley Park. I just came out of a sophisticated Chinook chopper that some brave soldier is going to be flying soon. And I can tell him and I can tell his loved ones that chopper has got the best equipment, the best hydraulics, made by the best hands in America.

We're equipping our troops, as we should. Boeing company is not only making good choppers; they're working on unmanned vehicles, advanced satellites, modern communication systems, the Army's future combat systems, all of which will help defend our country. In other words, this administration is thinking about today; we're also thinking about tomorrow. We're going to secure the country today, and we're going to prepare this country to be able to secure us down the road.

Another thing that's interesting that's happening at Boeing that probably you aren't aware of, but you should be, is that Boeing engineers lowered the first ballistic missile interceptor into its silo at Fort Greely, Alaska. It's the beginning of a missile defense system that was envisioned by Ronald Reagan, a system necessary to protect us against the threats of the 21st century. We want to continue to perfect this system, so we say to those tyrants who believe they can blackmail America and the free world, "You fire. We're going to shoot it down."

I think those who oppose this ballistic missile system really don't understand the threats of the 21st century. They're living in the past. We're living in the future. We're going to do what's necessary to protect this country.

Boeing is not only important for the defenses of America, Boeing is important because we've got great workers. And the great workers of America helped us overcome some economic obstacles that were pretty significant. You might remember, during the last 3½ years, we've been through a recession; we went through some corporate scandals; we went through a terrorist attack, all of which affected our economy. Yet we've overcome it. Our economy is strong and getting stronger. The reason we've overcome it is because we've got great workers in America. We've overcome it because we've got great small-business owners in America. We've got great farmers and ranchers in America. We've got a great spirit in America.

I'll argue vehemently, we've overcome it because of well-timed tax cuts. [*Applause*] Yes. It helped when we put more money in the people's pockets. It helped when we said, "You know, we hear your cries, and you need more money if you've got a child in your family." It helped the families of America to raise the child credit. It helped to lessen the marriage penalty. I don't know what kind of tax—I know what kind of Tax Code it is that penalizes marriage. It's a code that needs to change. We ought to be rewarding marriage in America, not penalizing it.

We helped our small businesses today. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, well below the national averages of the seventies, eighties, and nineties. I understand there's still people looking for work here in America. So long as anybody wants to work and can't find a job, I know we've got more work to do in Washington, DC. It starts with making sure your taxes are low. Be careful of these folks who travel around the country making all these big promises and say, "Oh, don't worry. We'll pay for it by taxing the rich." You know how that goes. The rich hires accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him raise your taxes. For the sake of economic growth, for the sake of job creation, we will keep America's taxes low.

We've got more work to do to keep jobs here in America. We've got to make sure this is the best place for people to expand the job base in the world. And therefore, we're going to make sure trade is free and fair. I was out at the Boeing plant in Seattle. I said a clear statement about fair trade to the folks out in that part of the world. I said we're going to work to get rid of the subsidies of Airbus that makes it difficult for Boeing to compete on a fair and level playing field in the world. We want there to be trade. We want there to be fair trade, because American workers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

We're going to make sure the health care system of America is accessible and affordable. You know, there's been a lot of talk about Medicare. For those of you with elderly parents, you've heard all this talk about Medicare reform. We got the job done. There's been a lot of politics with Medicare, but finally, an administration came along that could work with the Congress and strengthen Medicare so the seniors of America now have got prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

We need health savings accounts for American families. We need association health care plans for small businesses. You know what else we need in Pennsylvania and around the country? We need medical liability reform. These lawsuits are running up the cost of your health care, and they're running good docs out of practice right here in your State and in other States around the country. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform now.

We've got to make sure we have an energy policy in this country that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. You can't build these choppers without good energy supplies at affordable costs. I've submitted a plan to the United States Congress that encourages conservation, renewable sources of energy, ways to use coal in a clean way, ways to explore in environmentally friendly ways. The Congress needs to get an energy policy to my desk now in order to keep jobs here in America.

Finally, to make sure we keep jobs here, our education system has to be the best in the world. We're making pretty good progress when it comes to our public schools. You remember, when I came into office, we had a system that just moved our kids through grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we've increased Federal funding, but we've also, for the first time, asked the question, "Can you read and write?" It seems like a legitimate question for Government to ask on behalf of the taxpayers and families of America. And if you can read and write, we'll thank you; but if you can't, change before it's too late, so that no child gets left behind in this country.

We've done a lot of hard work, but there's more to do to move America forward. And there's more to do to protect this country from the threats of the 21st century. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch. Since September the 11th, America has led the world, and the world has changed for the better.

There are some serious lessons that we must remember about September the 11th. I would like to share some of those with you today. First, we're fighting an enemy that is so coldblooded it's hard for many Americans to fathom. These people will cut off your head like that, trying to shake our will and shake our conscience. That's why I remind our fellow citizens we must be resolute, and we must be steadfast in the face of these coldblooded killers. You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot hope for the best when it comes to these people. Therapy is not going to work. [*Laughter*] The only way to deal with them is to bring them to justice.

And we're making progress. Slowly but surely, we're bringing them to justice. It's a different kind of war. See, this is the kind of war where these killers will hide in a cave and use terror to shake our will. America's will will not be shaken. America will show strength and resolve for the sake of freedom and peace. We will continue to find these killers and defeat them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

In this different kind of war, we had to send a message to the world that we wanted others to join us, and they have. We've got a vast coalition of nations sharing intelligence, cutting off money. There's some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate their service. As a matter of fact, this morning I talked to Tony Blair, Silvio Berlusconi—the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and Italy. Once again, I thanked them for the sacrifices of their citizens to provide help in places like Afghanistan and Iraq so that the world would be more free and peaceful. I will continue to work with coalitions, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that it's just not enough to go after the killers who killed thousands of Americans, but that if there's a country which harbors them or feeds them, they must be held equally to account. And so I said to the Taliban in Afghanistan, "Cough up Al Qaida, or face serious consequences."

Now, let me say something to you. When the American President speaks, it better be clear for everybody to understand and he better mean it. And I meant it. And as a result of some brave Americans and coalition troops, the Taliban no longer exists in Afghanistan. And America and the world are safer for it. And these Chinook choppers helped free Afghanistan from the Taliban.

It's an amazing—think about this in Afghanistan. You remember when the four women were drug off the bus. They were voter registration people, and they got drug off the bus by some remnants of the Taliban and were killed because they were trying to register voters. And I remember some people saying, "Well, gosh, it just goes to show how terrible it is there in Afghanistan, and they're not going to have much of an election." Do you realize that there's now about 9.5 million people who have registered to vote in Afghanistan? It's an amazing statistic. Think about the world 3½ years ago. These thugs were running the country and providing training bases for Al Qaida. And the world was dangerous. We didn't realize it at the time, but think about how dangerous the world was then. And now, because we took action and upheld doctrine—we did what we said we were going to do—Afghanistan is free. The people are registering to vote.

I was in Cleveland, Ohio, recently and welcomed children to the International Children's Game, and there right to my right was the Afghan girls soccer team. They would not have been here without the United States of America having freed the people of that country.

And a free Afghanistan is not only an ally in the war on terror, and a free Afghanistan is not only a place where many young girls go to school for the first time, but a free Afghanistan makes America more secure and the world more peaceful.

Another important lesson of September the 11th that all Americans must realize is we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize, that you cannot hope for the best when you see a threat. In the old days, we could because we never thought anybody would attack us here at home. But that all changed on that day.

And so when I looked at Saddam Hussein, I saw a threat. And the reason I did is because he had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, and he was a sworn enemy of America. He had provided safe haven for terrorists. He had paid money to the families of suiciders. He was an unstable—he was a source of instability in a volatile part of the world. He was firing at our pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He was a threat.

And I recognized that I needed to go to the United States Congress to get support. I wanted the Congress involved, and I took it to the Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and they remembered the history of Saddam Hussein that I remembered. And so members of both political parties, including my opponent, supported our position in Iraq. They saw a threat.

The United Nations Security Council saw a threat. Remember, I went to the U.N. I believe diplomacy must be tried, and we must exhaust all options in the diplomatic front. See, war is the last resort for a President. It's the toughest decision a President will make. It's the hardest call a Commander in Chief can possibly decide. So I went to

the U.N. I said, "Look, why don't we, as the world, finally get together, when we say something, mean it, and let's disarm this guy. Take a look, and you decide if he needs to be disarmed." Remember, they had had resolution after resolution after resolution after resolution. And they passed another one, 15 to nothing, in the United Nations Security Council. It said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the free world said, in a 15 to nothing vote.

Saddam Hussein defied the free world, just as he had for year after year after year. He didn't give a hoot about what they said. He wasn't interested in complying to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when we sent the inspectors in, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make. And the choice was, do I trust a madman? Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best in this new era, or do I take action necessary to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

No, I realize we didn't find the stockpiles we thought we would find. But I want you to remember, Saddam had the capability of making weapons, and he could have shared that capability with our enemies. And in the post-9/11 environment, that's a risk America could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

We have a mission in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that is to help them achieve freedom. They've got leaders there now who believe in the future of their countries and want their countries to be free. As I told you, Afghanistan is headed toward elections; Iraq will be too. That's what we believe in. We believe in systems empowering the people. So we'll help them. We'll be there to help train their troops so they can stand up and take responsibility for their own societies. And we will complete the mission. It's in our national interest that these countries be free. They're going to be such powerful examples in neighborhoods that are desperate for freedom. You see, the way you defeat terror in the long run is to defeat hopelessness and poverty. And the best way to do that is to spread freedom. Free societies are peaceful societies.

By adhering to a—our beliefs in liberty, we're helping others and, at the same time, helping ourself. By standing strong for liberty, we're remembering lessons of the past. You know, I was talking to Prime Minister Koizumi—I do quite a bit—and my last dinner with him—I think my last dinner, one of my last dinners with him—it dawned on me how amazing it was that here I was talking to the leader of a country that my dad had fought against in World War II and your dads had fought against. And you know what we were talking about? We were talking about the peace. We were talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place. And I was having that conversation in part because our country understood that liberty could transform the habits of former enemies. And as Japan was rebuilt after World War II, we stood strong to our belief in freedom for all people. See, we believe that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

These are historic times. These are historic times. We've done a lot of hard work, I know that. But we're headed toward a freer world and a more peaceful world. My dream for this country is that when your kids grow up, the world is more—America is more secure, and they look out and see a peaceful horizon, not only for ourselves but for people all around the world. It's important we complete our mission in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I was disappointed the other day when my opponent said after he gets elected that he believes he'll substantially reduce the troops in Iraq in 6 months. See, I think that sets a terrible signal. I mean, after all, the enemy has got to wait for 6 months and 1 day. It sends a bad signal to our troops over there, who every day are doing their best to help that country rebuild and bring peace. It sends a bad signal to the Iraqis, doesn't it? They're wondering whether or not America is going to cut and run. They're wondering whether or not—you see, before they take risks for freedom, they're wondering or not whether we'll be there to help stabilize the country. So long as I'm the President of the

United States, America will keep its word to the people around the world.

I'll tell you another commitment I have made and one I'll keep. Our troops are going to have the best training, the best pay, the best possible equipment. When we put these folks in harm's way, the Federal Government must stand squarely by their side. I've increased the defense budgets—strongly increased the defense budgets—because I want these folks to have the best, and I know you do too. As a matter of fact, the defense budgets have increased as great as they ever had since Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States.

That's why I went to the United States Congress last September and said, "We need supplemental funding to support our troops in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq." That was for body armor and fuel and spare parts, just all the things necessary to help these people complete their mission. And I—we got great bipartisan support. That means people from both parties realized the funding was important—so strong that only 12 people voted against it in the United States Senate, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. I think when you put people into harm's way, you ought to make sure they're well-equipped.

And so they asked him—they started pressing him. You know how it is in politics. And so he said, "Fine, well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I can assure you people don't talk like that on the floor of this factory. They'll tell you what's on their mind. And then he got pressed further, and he went on to say, well, he's proud of it, and then, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've done a lot of hard work, a lot of hard work, and there's more work to be done to do our duty, which is to secure our country, to protect our homeland, and to help the world become more free and more peaceful.

You know, this is a changing world of ours, and there are some things that won't change, however. The values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, and reverence and integrity, hard work and duty. The institutions that give us direction will not change, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. This is important to our country, that these values be strong.

That's why I stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility here in America. You know, the culture is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. You know, if you're worried about the quality of the education in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, you're responsible for doing something about it. A responsibility society is one in which every CEO in corporate America understands he or she is responsible for telling the truth to the shareholders and employees. And a responsibility society is one in which each of us understands we're responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

I'm running again because I want to continue to rally the armies of compassion all around our country. See, Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arms around somebody, says, "I love you," and "How can I help you?" We must continue to rally those compassionate folks who are willing to volunteer their time so America can change one heart and one soul and one conscience at a time.

Tom Shaffer is a Boeing employee. He's up here. He runs the Race Against Drugs. He volunteers time to help convince kids to get off drugs. He's making a difference. All he's got to do is convince one soul, and he's helped that life and helped change America. Volunteers come—they do all kinds of things around our country.

Paula Zimmerman is with us. She started what's called Touch of Home. Her son, Private First Class Kevin Zimmerman, is a member of the Army's Crazy Horse Company, 1st Battalion. He's in Sadr City, Iraq. He's doing his duty for his country, and his mom has sent 160 care packages to Crazy Horse Company. She took time out of her life to volunteer, to lift somebody's spirit, to help some soul understand that a lot of people back home appreciate what they're doing. Government didn't make her do it. She decided to do it because she cares about her son and her country.

I realize one person can't do everything, but a person can do something to help change this country for the better. I want to thank our two examples for volunteers. I want to thank you all for loving your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. You're helping your country when you do so.

You know, for all of us, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, a strong belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were hardhats there, yelling at me, "Whatever it takes, Mr. President." I can remember walking down the line, shaking hands and thanking people. A guy looked me in the eye—he had just come out of the rubble—and he said, "Do not let me down."

See, he took that day personally. Everybody on that site took it personally. I know you took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up daily trying to best figure out how to protect our country. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies and secure the homeland, whatever it takes.

When I traveled your great State and our country 4 years ago, I said, if you would give me the honor of holding this office, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

Thank you for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. at the Boeing Co. In his remarks, he referred to Mark Madden, employee, Boeing Co.; John DeFrancisco, president, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America Local 1069; John M. Perzel, speaker, Pennsylvania House of Representatives; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Memorandum on Continuation of United States Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Colombia

August 17, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–42

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Continuation of U.S. Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Colombia

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 1012 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2291–4), I hereby certify, with respect to Colombia, that: (1) interdiction of aircraft reasonably suspected to be primarily engaged in illicit drug trafficking in that country's airspace is necessary because of the extraordinary threat posed by illicit drug trafficking to the national security of that country; and (2) that country has appropriate procedures in place to protect against innocent loss of life in the air and on the ground in connection with such interdiction, which shall at a minimum include effective means to identify and warn an aircraft before the use of force is directed against the aircraft.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register* and to notify the Congress of this determination.

George W. Bush

Remarks in Hedgesville, West Virginia

August 17, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. And thanks for inviting me here to Hedgesville. It's such an honor to be back in what they call the Mountain State. What a beautiful place. I really—some of them think you can find the heart and soul in Hollywood. I think you find it right here. This is the heart and soul of America, as far as I'm concerned.

I want to thank you all for coming. Thanks for bringing your families. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm traveling your important State not only asking for the vote but asking for your help. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. We have an obligation in a free society to go to the polls. So I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors, and then, come voting time, head them to the polls. And remind them if they want this country to be safer, stronger, and better, put George Bush and Dick Cheney back in there. With your help, we carried this State in 2000. With your help, we'll carry it again and win a great victory in November of 2004.

I am sorry Laura is not with me today. She's out working. [*Laughter*] She's asking for the vote. What a great mother and a great wife, and she's doing a great job as our First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. He's a fine Vice President. I admit it. He's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Gale for his kind introduction. I appreciate his service to the West Virginia men's basketball team. What a great man he is and a great class act. I'm honored—I appreciate, Coach, that you'd introduce me. I appreciate standing by your side.

I want to thank my friend, Shelley Moore Capito, the Congressman for the great State of West Virginia. I want to thank Don Dellinger, Manny Arvon, and Dr. Bill Queen of the school system around here. I appreciate you letting me come to this facility, and thanks for working to make sure our kids get a good education here in West Virginia. I want to thank all the people running for office, all the local officials. Thanks for showing up. Most importantly, I want to thank you all. I'm honored you're here. This is a huge turnout, and I'm grateful for it.

I want to thank the Hedgesville High School Marching Band for playing here today. And, of course, I've got to thank my friends the Bellamy Brothers for being here as well. I'm honored they're here.

Listen, I'm here asking for the vote, and I understand one thing about politics, though—there's only one reason to look backwards at the record, and that's who best to lead us forward. We've done a lot together. You think about what we've been through. We've been through a lot, and we've accomplished a lot. But I'm here to tell you there is more to do. We've got more work to do to make this country a hopeful place. We've got more work to do to make sure that our schools work. We've got more to do to keep us safe. We've got more to do to spread freedom, and we've got more to do to make the world a peaceful place.

Audience member. You're the man for the job!

The President. [*Laughter*] Listen, we've got more work to do to make our schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember when we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of the children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We increased Federal funding, but we've also started to ask important questions: Can our children read and write and add and subtract? We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. And when we find schools that will not teach and will not change, we're bold enough to challenge the status quo.

And we're making progress all across America. We're closing an achievement gap in this country. But there's more work to be done. We want to make sure high school diplomas mean something. We want to make sure we have strong math and science in our

classrooms so our children can compete in the 21st century. We want to make sure we've got Internet in our classrooms so we can bring the latest education to help every child in America. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years a rising generation will have more confidence and more skills to be able to realize the great promise of our country.

We got more to do to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. You might remember all the stale debates on Medicare. Campaign after campaign, they'd come to West Virginia and say, "Put me in office. We'll make sure Medicare is strengthened and modernized." We got the job done. Already more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards which will provide real savings for our seniors. And starting in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that meets their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

There's more work to be done in health care. To make sure that people get quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've established health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their needs. Most people get their health insurance through their jobs, and many small businesses are having trouble affording health care for their employees. We must allow small businesses to pool their risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do.

We got to make sure we have technology in health care so—reduce the costs and reduce medical errors. And one thing is for certain: To make sure you've got health care which is affordable and available, we need medical liability reform. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We need medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that the health care decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Listen, we've got more work to do to make this economy stronger. We've been through a lot. We've been through a recession, corporate scandals, and a terrorist attack. Yet, this economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. And the reason why is because we've got great workers in America. We've got great farmers in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America, and so is the spirit of our fellow citizens. We've overcome those obstacles, and I think one of the main reasons why, besides the spirit of our country, is because of well-timed tax relief.

We didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We said, "If you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief." And we're helping our families by raising the child credit. We're doing something about the marriage penalty. Listen, the Tax Code has got it wrong. We ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage.

We're helping our small businesses, and this time the check was actually in the mail. [*Laughter*] Because we acted, our economy, since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. The unemployment rate in this important State is 5.3 percent. The people of this State are working.

I'm not going to rest until somebody who wants to work can find a job. There's more work to be done. In order to keep jobs here in America, we need an energy policy. That includes using West Virginia coal. We need more conservation, more renewable. We need to use the resources we have in environmentally friendly ways. What I'm telling you is, to keep jobs here in America, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We need tort reform. We need to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington. And we need to keep your taxes low. You know, you've heard the talk in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has made over $2 trillion of new spending promises. And so they asked him the other day, they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, I'm going to tax the rich." You can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for all his promises. So guess who is going to end up paying? Yes. But we're

not going to let him. We're going to win in November.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we're going to make sure trade is fair for American workers and American manufacturers and American entrepreneurs. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we've got to make sure our workers are trained for the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong backer in the community college system. The community college system will allow people to go back to work, and we'll provide help for them so they can get the skills necessary to fill the jobs that will exist in the 21st century.

After 4 more years, there will be better jobs in America. After 4 more years, there will be better—a better farm economy in America. After 4 more years, the entrepreneurial spirit will be strong. And after 4 more years, America will still be the strongest economy among any major industrialized nation in the world.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. Our future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, young girls go to school for the first time in that country. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. I'm ready for 4 more years.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th is that this Nation must deal with threats before they fully materialize. I saw a threat, and I went to the United States Congress. I said, "This man is a threat to the United States." They looked at the intelligence, the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the facts about Saddam Hussein, and members of both political parties, including my opponent, agreed that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

I then went to the United Nations, and I did so because force is the last resort for America. The decision to go to war is the toughest decision a President will ever make. I went to the United Nations in the hopes that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at and the Congress looked at and came to the same conclusion we did: Saddam Hussein was a threat. In the U.N. Security Council, there was a 15-to-nothing vote that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. He went so far as to systematically deceive the inspectors that we sent in that country.

So I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action necessary to defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons. And he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. After September the 11th, that is a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision, and America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq, and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the anti-war candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we haven't found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank the Senator for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] Remember, there's over 75 days left in the campaign. He can still change his mind. [*Laughter*]

I'm running for 4 more years because I understand that we have more work to do to secure our country, to work with our friends and allies around the world, to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Today I talked to Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Ministers of great allies. We talked about how to spread peace and freedom around the world. These are important allies, and I appreciate their contributions. I will continue, over the next 4 years, to make sure our alliance is strong. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become democratic and peaceful societies. Those countries have now got strong leaders, men dedicated to the future of their countries. You realize over 9 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan. They long for freedom. They want to be free, and we'll help them. Our military forces will help meet our goal of stable and free countries who are allies in the war on terror by not only providing security but by training Iraqi and Afghan forces so they can stand up and defend their countries. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible, so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

The other day my opponent said if he's elected, the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. That sends a dangerous message. The enemy can wait 6 months and 1 day. It sends the wrong message to our troops in theater. It sends the wrong message to the Iraqis. They're wondering whether or not America means what it says. They're wondering whether or not they are willing to take risks for freedom. They're wondering whether or not tyranny will come back into their land. No, when this country says something, we will honor our commitment. Afghanistan and Iraq will be free.

We've done a lot of hard work and the world is better for it. In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. We've got a fantastic military. And I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting the example for those who wear today's uniform. I've seen the decency of our troops, their great courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I have made a commitment to them and to their loved ones. Our troops will have the resources they need to fight and win this war against the terrorists. This administration has met that commitment. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This

funding went for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was an important vote. We received great bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate—such a strong vote in the Senate that only 12 members voted against it, two of whom are my opponent and his running mate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When I asked him about it he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I don't think that's the way the folks around here talk. They tell you what's on your mind. You know, then he got pressed even further and he said he was proud of his vote; then he said, "It was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror. That's poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free societies listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. Free societies are peaceful societies. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're helping others secure their freedom, and we're securing our own country. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace that we all long for. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We got more work to do to secure this homeland. There's an enemy who hate us, and they're still plotting. It's the realities of the world we live in. We have a difference of opinion about these people. My opponent said the other day that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside down. It shows a misunderstanding of the people that we have to bring to justice. See, during the ninties, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before America went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It's wrong to blame America for the evil of these killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back; we defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're working hard to protect the homeland. You got to know there's a lot of people at the Federal and State and local level working as hard as they possibly can to protect our fellow citizens. And I'm grateful for their contributions and their sacrifice and their hard work. We created the Department of Homeland Security to better guard you. We've got better communications between our intelligence networks. The PATRIOT Act is a vital tool so law enforcement can run down these terrorists before they hit America again.

We've been working hard to reform everything in Washington, but reform in Washington is hard. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of entrenched interests there. It's hard to challenge the status quo, but I've been willing to do so. See, it's not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get the job done.

When it comes to reforming our schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms to give our families and seniors more access and better choices in health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to defending America and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And when it comes to electing a President, America must put somebody in the White House who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. You know, these are exciting times we're living in. It is a time of change, and change can be unsettling. I understand that. But if Government stands side by side with families or workers, it can help a lot. See, I want people owning something in America. I want people owning and controlling their own health care, so if they change jobs, they can take them from job to job. I want people owning and managing their own personal retirement accounts when it comes to Social Security. Listen, the Social Security system is in good shape for

older folks like me. [*Laughter*] It's the younger workers we've got to be thinking about. In order to make sure the younger workers got a retirement system that meets its promises, younger workers ought to be allowed to own their own personal savings accounts.

You know, one of the things I love about America is, more and more people are owning their home. The homeownership rate is at the highest its ever been in this country. What a wonderful idea, when somebody opens their door and says, "This is my home. Welcome to my property." We want more people owning their home in this country. We want more people owning their own business in this country. The small-business sector is a vibrant part of the health of our Nation. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In these changing times, there are going to be some things that won't change, as far as I'm concerned: Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the non-negotiable demands of human dignity; the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture in life in America where every person counts and everybody matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench. We stand for a culture of responsibility. You know this culture is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are a mother and father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the schools here in your neighborhood, you're responsible for doing something about it. You're responsible for supporting your teachers, your principals, the people involved with the schools. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion. I understand the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody who needs some love and says, "What can I do to help you? How can I stand by you? What can I do to make your life better?" Listen, America is going to change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time because of the armies of compassion in this great land.

For all America, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time when we must have firm resolve, clear vision, and a strong abiding faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another one began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001, and it is a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I was working the line there to thank people, and a guy looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." He took that day personally. The people searching the rubble took it personally. You took it personally, and so did I.

I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Now, we've been through a lot together, and there's more work to be done. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of a country. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a younger generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace.

You know, when I campaigned around your State in 2000, I said that if you gave me the high honor of serving as your President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all, very much. We're on to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. at Hedgesville High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gale Catlett, former men's basketball coach, University of West Virginia; Don Dellinger, principal, Hedgesville High School; Manny P. Arvon, superintendent, Berkley County Schools; William F. Queen, president, Berkley County Schools Board of Education; entertainers the Bellamy Brothers; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy.

Remarks in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's great to be here in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. What a beautiful day. You know what I think? I think Wisconsin is "W" country. I'm proud to be here. I appreciate this warm hospitality. You know, my opponent said the other day, "You can find the heart and soul in Hollywood." I think you find it right here in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. I'm glad to be with the heart and soul of America.

And I'm here to ask for your vote. I believe if you're seeking the vote, you've got to go ask for it. I'm here to tell you I've got more work to do to make this country safer and stronger and better for every single citizen. And I appreciate you coming out to say hello.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I know it. She's in Colorado today campaigning. She is a fantastic First Lady, a great mom, and I love her dearly. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man. They call it the Bush-Cheney ticket. I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. Now listen, I admit to you, he isn't the prettiest one in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I appreciate the Kell boys for having us over here, John and Tom. I love to come to places where people are entrepreneurial, where people are willing to expand the job base. That's what it's all about in this country, to elevate the entrepreneurial spirit. And the Kells represent that spirit, and I'm honored that you would have us here.

I appreciate being on the same stage with my friend Congressman Mark Green. He's a good man. Treasurer Jack Voight is with us as well. I appreciate you being here, Jack. I'm honored you're here. I want to thank the mayor, Mayor Doug Sandvick, for being here. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. My only advice to you, Mr. Mayor, is fill the potholes.

State Senator Dale Schultz, the next Congressman from this part of the world, is with us today. I hope you put him in to the United States Congress. He'll do a fine job for the people of this part of the world. I appreciate all the State and local officials here. I want to thank everybody for organizing this fantastic event.

I know you join me in congratulating the Hamm brothers from the great State of Wisconsin for their performance in the Olympics. I know they made the people of Wisconsin proud. They made this Texan proud too.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, people putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls. I urge you to continue to register people to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. In a free land, people must participate in the elections. So do your duty as grassroots activists and continue to register people. Convince everybody to vote, and when you get them headed to the polls, remind them George Bush and Dick Cheney are willing and ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm traveling your State a lot. And I'm enjoying every minute of it. You know why I'm coming back? We were close last time. With your help, this time we

will carry Wisconsin and have a great victory in November of 2004.

In the past few years, we have been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. I'm asking for your vote because we have so much more to do to move this country forward. We've got more to do to create jobs and improve schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace. We've made much progress, and we will do more on behalf of the American people.

We got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember what it was like 3½ years ago. We were spending money at the Federal level, but year after year, children were being shuffled from grade to grade without learning the basics. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I wanted to raise the bar. We've increased Federal funding, but now we're asking the question that you expect us to ask: Can our children read and write and add and subtract? And if not, we'll make sure they get help early. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in parental involvement, and we will challenge the status quo when we find schools that will not teach and will not change.

There's more work to be done. We want to have early intervention programs. We want to make sure we intervene in junior high when children can't read and write. We want to make sure we emphasize math and science so our kids have got the capabilities of competing in the 21st century. We want our high school diplomas to mean something. After 4 more years, a rising generation of youngsters will have the skills and the confidence necessary to realize the great promise of the American Dream.

We've got more to do to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. You might remember all the debates of the past, when politician after politician said, "We're going to fix Medicare." And nothing ever got done till we came to town. We got the job done. We have strengthened Medicare. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

There's more to do. We've expanded community health centers to help low-income America—Americans get primary care. We've established what's called health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to working on the issue of costs and availability, we've made progress. There's more work to do be done. You see, most people get their health care through businesses and most small businesses cannot afford health care. And so, therefore, Government must allow small businesses to pool risk so they can afford health insurance for their employees, just like big businesses can.

We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures. In order to make sure your health care system works, in order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we must have medical liability reform. These frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now. And in all we do to improve health care, we will make sure that health care decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by Government bureaucrats.

There's more to do to keep this economy growing. We've been through a lot. Our economy has overcome some mighty obstacles. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a war and a terrorist attack. And yet, we've overcome those obstacles because the spirit of this country is strong. Our workers are great. Our farmers are really good. The small-business sector is vibrant and alive. And I think one of the reasons we've come through these obstacles is because of well-timed tax cuts.

When we saw what was happening, we acted. We said to the Congress, "Let people

keep more of their own money." Notice I said more of their own money; I didn't say Government money. If they have money in Washington, it's not the Government's money; it's your money. And by letting you keep more of your own money, this economy is growing. It's strong, and it's getting stronger. Our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added over 1.5 million—nearly 1.5 million new jobs in the past year. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. The unemployment rate in Wisconsin is 5 percent. We've done our job. We've created the conditions for economic growth, but there is more work to do.

I'm proud of our agricultural agenda. We set out a good agenda for Wisconsin's and America's farmers. You know, when I was campaigning, I said these dairy compacts must treat every farmer fairly. When you get people heading to the polls, remind them of what my opponent said. He supported a Northeast dairy compact, which put the farmers in this part of the world at a distinct disadvantage.

I believe there's more work to do to make sure this economy continues to grow. I want to continue and open up markets. You see, I believe we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level. I want people eating Wisconsin corn. I want them eating Wisconsin dairy products. Our farm economy is strong because markets are open to U.S. farm products, and I'll keep it that way.

There's more work to be done to make sure people have got work here at home. Listen, to make sure jobs are here, we need a national energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy, energy policy that encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for resources, clean coal technology, renewable sources of energy like biodiesel and ethanol, more conservation. But we must, in order to keep jobs here, have an energy policy. Congress needs to get my plan to my desk for my signature.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to have reasonable regulations. Many of you fill out a lot of paperwork. I can't guarantee anybody in Government has read it. [*Laughter*] But I do know that in order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to be reasonable about the requests we put on employers. We need tort reform here in America. We need fiscal discipline when it comes to spending your money. We got to be wise about how we spend it, and we must keep your taxes low.

This campaign is getting cranked up. My opponent has already promised over $2 trillion of new spending, and there's still 2 more months to go. [*Laughter*] So I asked him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Tax the rich." The problem is, you can't tax the rich enough to raise $2 trillion. So guess who's going to pay? You are. But we're not going to let him. We're going to win in November of 2004.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including the United States of America. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in their lives. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at

American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He killed tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat. He was a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th, a vital lesson of this country that we must never forget, is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. I went to the United States Congress to get congressional support. Members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history. Both Republicans and Democrats, including my opponent, came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat.

Listen, the toughest decision a President can ever make is to send citizens into combat. And so I went to the United Nations, hoping to solve this problem diplomatically. I said to the United Nations, "We see a threat." They responded. They looked at the intelligence. They remembered the history. The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

The world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the world. He wasn't listening to what the world said. As a matter of fact, you might remember, we sent inspectors into Iraq. He systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. It's a risk we could not afford to take after the attacks of September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpiles we all thought we would have found, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank him for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] But I want to remind you—I want to remind you, there's still 76 days left in the campaign for him to change his mind. [*Laughter*]

We have more to do. I'm running again because I understand there's more work to do to secure America. We will continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and the foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, I don't believe you can talk sense to these people. I do not believe you can negotiate with them. I know we must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We've put together a great coalition. There's over 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate the sacrifice of the moms and dads from those countries who've joined with the sacrifices of the moms and dads of our countries, to have their loved ones overseas securing freedom and peace. It's a great contribution that these countries have made. I'll continue to work with those alliances. But I'll assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq. It's important we do so. These countries are becoming free countries, peaceful countries. Do you realize over 9 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan? It's an amazing thought, you know? Three-and-a-half years ago, they were run by the Taliban. They pulled women into the public square to whip them. Today, women are getting ready to vote. They're headed toward freedom. Iraq is going to head toward

free elections. They got leaders who understand that if you listen to the aspirations of your people, the country will be better off. Our job is to provide a secure environment for those countries to head toward elections and, as well, train Iraqi and Afghan forces so they can defend themselves—to give them a chance to defeat those killers who are stopping the advance of freedom. We'll complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

But in this campaign, you better watch what you say. The other day, my opponent said if he's elected the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. See, that's a bad signal to send to the enemy. All they got to do is wait 6 months and 1 day. It's a bad signal to send to our troops, that your mission won't be completed. It's a bad signal to send to the Iraqi citizens who wonder whether or not America will keep its word. I believe when America speaks, we must mean what we say. We will complete the mission so Iraq and Afghanistan are free and peaceful countries.

Our commitment are kept by the men and women who wear the uniform. I'm proud of our military. I appreciate the veterans who are here for setting such a good example for those who wear our uniforms. I met Specialist Wayne Trimbell, behind the stage here. He's from the 724th Engineering Battalion of the Wisconsin National Guard. He served our country in Iraq. He was telling me how he built bridges and roads and installed electricity. He said, "It made me recognize the things America takes for granted. I'm proud to say I served my country." I'm proud he served his country too. I know the decency and courage of those who wear our uniform. The cause of freedom and peace is in really good hands.

And we got to make sure our military has everything they need to complete the mission. Our Federal Government owes them the best pay, the best training, the best equipment, and the best possible support. I have done my duty as the Commander in Chief to support our troops. As a matter of fact, last September, I went to the Congress and asked for supplemental funding. I asked Congress to spend money for spare parts and body armor and fuel. And we got great support in the halls of Congress. Matter of fact, that support was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the supplemental funding to support our troops in combat, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked about why, he said, well, he actually did vote for the $87 billion right before he voted against it. [*Laughter*] I don't think people talk like that here. He went on to say, when pressed, that he was proud of his vote, and then he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've had the largest increases in defense spending since Ronald Reagan was the President. Military pay has gone up by 21 percent since I've been the President. The housing conditions are better for those who wear our uniform. Today I'm going to announce a new proposal to help our men and women activated for duty in the National Guard and Reserves. These brave Americans put their jobs on hold and leave their family behind when we called. Yet, under current rules, their education benefits don't reflect the high value of service we place on their time and duty. My proposal will help correct that by substantially increasing monthly education benefits for all Guard members and reservists on active duty for more than 90 consecutive days.

As well, we'll help our children of military families meet the challenges of a life on the move. People are going from base to base, and these moves often conflict with school rules from State to State. So we're going to put out grant money to help States ease the burden so it's more seamless for families to go from one State to the next, so their education—their kids get a great education. What I'm telling you is, we'll continue to stand side by side with those who wear the uniform and the family members of those who wear the uniform.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty, and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and

peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Freedom—free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens.

I know we've got a mom here whose son is overseas. I want to tell you, your son is serving during historic times. By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping others realize their dreams, and we're making America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're spreading peace. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our own country. Americans understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. Thank you for your son's service.

We'll do more to protect our country because there's enemies still out there who hate us. It's a reality of the times we're in. My opponent says—and this is a difference of opinion—I think you're going to find there's a lot of differences of opinion in this campaign—[*laughter*]—he says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic—I know the logic is upside-down. It shows a misunderstanding of the nature of these people. See, during the 1990s, these killers and terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It's wrong to blame America for anger and the evil of these killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back; you defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We've started the hard process of reform in Washington. I emphasize "hard process." We've created the new Department of Homeland Security. There's a lot of good people working hard at the Federal, State, and local level to protect you and the citizens, and I appreciate their hard work. Listen, the PATRIOT Act is a vital tool for our law enforcement to be able to find these terrorists before they attack again. Our FBI agents are working overtime. We're sharing information better than ever before. We'll continue to work to make sure our intelligence gathering is the best in the world so we can better protect the homeland, and we'll continue to push for reforms in Washington.

But it's not enough to advocate reform. You got to get the job done. That's what this campaign is really all about. When it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to available and affordable health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to overcoming the obstacles to our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to securing America and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in office who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're living in exciting times, and these are times of change, and change can be unsettling. And one way for Government to help people during times of change is to make sure there's a lifetime of learning for workers at our community college systems. Another way to help is to promote an ownership society. See, we want people owning and managing their own health care accounts, where if they change jobs it goes with them from job to job.

I'm worried about our Social Security system. I'm not worried about it for baby boomers like me. There's—the system is solvent. But if you're a younger worker, I think it's important that you be allowed to have your own personal savings account that you can carry with you throughout your life, to pass generation to generation.

In changing times, I love the idea of more and more Americans owning their own home. Today, the homeownership rate is the highest it's ever been in our Nation's history. Think about this: More and more of our citizens are opening up their door saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." I like the idea that more and more people in America are owning their own business. We'll continue to work for an ownership society in America. We understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

And during these changing times, though, there's some things that won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the

values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. We stand for institutions like marriage and family which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who will faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility. Listen, the culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of education in this community, you're responsible for doing something about it. You're responsible for supporting your teachers and your school board members and supporting the schools. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. I understand the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul steps up and says, "What can I do for you? How can I help you? I love you. Can I make a difference in your life?"

Listen, there are thousands of people all across the country serving this Nation by helping somebody who hurts. To rally the armies of compassion means to call upon our citizens to continue hearing a call, because I understand we can change America one heart, one soul, and once conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve. This is a time where we need clear vision. This is a time where we need steadfast belief in the values that make this country a great country.

You know, I'll never forget the day when one era ended and another began, and I know you won't either. I was in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. I clearly remember the workers in hardhats screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking people's hands and thanking them, looking in a guy's eyes; they were bloodshot. He was tired and worn out. He'd been looking for a buddy in the rubble. He said, "Do not let me down."

See, he took that day personally. Everybody searching in the rubble took it personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day thinking about how best to protect this country. I will never relent in chasing down the enemy and securing America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together. We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work. We're making a difference. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity throughout every corner of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a younger generation. We'll lead the cause of freedom and work to spread the peace.

When I campaigned in Wisconsin 4 years ago, I said, if you give me the high honor of holding this office, I would uphold the dignity and honor of the Presidency. And with your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored you're here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at the Kell Container Corp. In his remarks, he referred to John Kell, president, and Tom Kell, chief executive officer, Kell Container Corp.; Wisconsin State Treasurer Jack C. Voight; Mayor Doug Sandvick of Chippewa Falls, WI; Dale Schultz, candidate for Congress in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District; Paul and Morgan Hamm, who won silver medals as members of the U.S. men's gymnastics team at the Olympics in Athens, Greece, on August 16; Col. Muammar Abu

Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at the Kansas City Chiefs Training Camp in River Falls, Wisconsin

August 18, 2004

Carl D. Peterson. Thank you so much for being here. It's great to have you. Thanks for taking your time. I know you know our head coach well.

The President. I do know Dick. Thanks. Thanks for letting me come by and say hi. I appreciate you coming out to say hello. I'm in the neighborhood. [*Laughter*] I'm shaking hands. But I wish you all the best this season.

I particularly want to thank the players who, in the off-season or during the season, are helping people who hurt. I know you've got a big platform, and you can make a difference in people's lives. The fact that you can help somebody who is in need is a great contribution. It's one thing to be a star on the field; it's another thing to be a star off the field. I know a lot of you are.

Head Coach Dick Vermeil. These guys are great guys.

Mr. Peterson. We're very proud of this guy's father—Priest Holmes's dad re-upped, and he's in Iraq right now. And our prayers and thoughts are with him. And we got to see Priest set the NFL record at Arrowhead last year, 27 touchdowns.

The President. I remember when I was the Governor of Texas—[*laughter*]—I'm trying to keep his taxes low. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Peterson. Everybody here wants you to continue to do the same thing, believe me.

The President. Good luck to you all. Let me walk around and shake some hands.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:21 p.m. at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Carl D. Peterson, president, general manager, and chief executive officer, Kansas City Chiefs, referred to running back Priest Holmes. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion in Hudson, Wisconsin

August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Please be seated.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. That's what I'm here to tell you. I'm ready to go. There's more work to be done. I'm here asking for 4 more years.

Thank you all for coming. I think we've got a pretty interesting way to explain why I'm running for President again today. What I thought I would do is spend some time talking about some issues with some of your fellow citizens here, who will help explain why I make decisions the way I do. Then if we've got time, I'd like to answer some questions from you. Then I've got to go across the river——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They vote too. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you all for coming. I really am out asking for the vote. I think it's really important to travel the States that are key States and ask people—and tell people why you're running. And that's what I'm doing today in your great State. You know, we came close last time in Wisconsin. This time we're going to win it.

I want to thank you all for your help. Listen, I know there's some people here who volunteer for the campaign, and I want—let me tell you what that means. It means signs. It means making phone calls. It means encouraging people to register to vote.

You know, I like to tell people an interesting story about Afghanistan, and I'll talk about that a little more later on, but there was some doubt in people's minds as to whether or not, once free, the Afghan people would participate in democracy, particularly after the Taliban drug some people off one of the buses—women—off the buses and executed them because they happened to be holding voter registration cards. Today in that country, 3½ years after being brutalized by the Taliban, over 9 million people have registered to vote. See, they are—it's a great statistic, isn't it?

We have a duty in this country to vote. So I hope you register your friends and neighbors. Tell them they have a duty to vote. And when you head them—get them headed toward the polls, tell them if they want the country safer, stronger, and better, put old George Bush and Dick Cheney back in.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. Gosh, she would love this beautiful part of the world. She is in Colorado campaigning, and then she's headed to Texas. And after my speech tonight, I'm heading down to Crawford as well. But the reason I bring her up is she is—I'm a lucky man. She is a great mom. She's really a wonderful wife, and she's doing a great job as the First Lady. She has come to realize what I have realized, that simple gestures of kindness to people really can affect their lives in positive ways, that when we've been given this awesome responsibility and a high honor of serving our country, it really doesn't take much to help lift somebody's spirits. And Laura goes around the country talking to teachers and thanking them for teaching, and talking to people who are involved with literacy programs and thanking them for their literacy programs.

I remember when she did the radio address and spoke to the women of Afghanistan. The feedback on that was fantastic. People were just so grateful that somebody in a high position in America would speak to their hopes and aspirations. Her job satisfaction level is high. I hope there's a lot of reasons you want to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

A couple of things. I want to thank my friend Mark Green, Congressman Mark Green, for traveling today. He's a good fellow. Thank you, Congressman. He's a good, smart, honest guy with whom I've got a great working relationship.

I've also been traveling with Dale Schultz. He's going to make a fine United States Congressman. I appreciate him. He's working hard. He's knocking on a lot of doors, which is what you have to do if you're going to—if you intend on winning. I think he'll be a great Congressman.

Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. I'm proud you're here. Where are you? There he is. Mr. Mayor, thank you. Thanks for coming.

You know, I said I want the country to be stronger and safer and better. Let me start with what it means to be a better country. A better country is a country that makes sure every child is educated. One of the reasons I'm running again is because there's more work to do to make sure that the philosophy behind No Child Left Behind is fully implemented. What that philosophy said was—is that we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, if you have a system that doesn't expect the best, it's a system that tends to quit on kids too early and just shuffles them through, grade to grade. And guess who gets shuffled through? These so-called hard-to-educate. And that's not good enough for America. And so what we did in Washington is we said, "We'll spend more Federal dollars, and, in return for Federal dollars, we'll finally start asking the question, have you achieved the goals?" See, we'll start to measure. And the reason you measure is not to punish. The reason you measure is to correct problems early, before it's too late.

And so the No Child Left Behind Act sets high expectations and high standards. It believes in local control of schools. It believes in empowering parents. But it also says, "Let's measure to determine whether curriculum works, to determine whether or not our children are learning to read." And if not, let's correct the problem before it is too late. And we're making good progress. These test scores are beginning to rise. The achievement gap is beginning to close. And what I'm telling you is there's more work to do when it comes to the education. I want the high school diploma to mean something. We need to focus on math and science to make sure our youngsters have the skills necessary to compete in this world. I like to tell people we've—we're getting the job done when it comes to our schools. And by making our schools work, America will be a better place.

I'll tell you what else will make America a better place. It's a place where those of us in Government understand the limitations of Government. See, money can hand out—Government hands out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's life. That happens when people who have been called to love

a neighbor step up and put their arm around a lonely soul or somebody who hurts or somebody who needs compassion and says, "What can I do? How can I help you?" And so I'm running again to continue to rally the armies of compassion, to encourage people who want to love a neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves to continue to do so. And equally as well is to open up Federal monies, Federal grants to faith-based organizations, people that are able to—[*applause*].

One of the examples I like to use is, if somebody is addicted to drugs, sometimes a counselor can work. But a lot of times it requires a change of heart in order to change life. And the faith-based programs are those programs that are able to help a person change their heart, to get them less hooked on drugs or alcohol. And so there's a—part of my vision is for a better country. I want everybody in America to realize the great promise of this land.

This is a fantastic country we have. And the values are—when I'm talking about changing America one heart and one soul at a time, I'm talking about Scout masters who take time to work with these kids to pass on good, solid values. I'm talking about people who go see a neighbor and a shut-in. See, we can change and will change America one heart at a time, one soul at a time. Listen, I recognize somebody can't do everything, but somebody can do something to help this country be a compassionate, hopeful place.

I'm here to talk about making the country a stronger country. That starts with making sure our economy is strong. Listen, we want people working. That's what we want in America. And we've been through a lot. When you're out there campaigning and talking to people, remind them what we have been through as a country. We've been through a recession. That means we're going backwards. That means it's hard to find work. It means if you're a small-business owner, you're nervous about making payroll.

And then we went through a terrorist attack. They estimated it cost us, after that attack, about a million jobs. It hurt when the enemy hit us. We also went through corporate scandals, which affected us. I mean, look, we're a country that depends upon honesty. I mean, when people—when you're an investor or when you're looking at balance sheets, you expect there to be good, honest numbers. And when we started to uncover the fact that some didn't tell the truth, it began to affect our confidence. It just did. We acted. I mean, it's real clear right now that if you are dishonest in the boardrooms of America, there's going to be a consequence. But we've overcome these obstacles.

And one of the reasons why I believe we overcame the obstacles is because of tax relief. I believe by cutting the taxes, it helped. And I want to thank the Congressman for his work on that. We did it, I think, the fair way. We said, "If you pay taxes, you get relief." We raised the child credit to help people with children. We've mitigated the consequences of the marriage penalty. We believe that the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage.

We helped our small businesses—we're going to talk to two entrepreneurs today about what the tax relief meant for their business. They can explain it better than I can. After all, they're the ones—they're the risktakers; they're the people who are on the frontline of when it comes to hiring people.

Before we talk to them and talk to some others who are benefiting from the tax relief and have got some interesting things to talk about, I do want to talk about what else needs to be done. You know, there's concern about jobs going overseas. I share the concern. We want people working here. We want our jobs here. And the best way to do so is to make sure this is the best place to do business in the world. The best way to make sure jobs are here is, this is a place for risktakers, feel comfortable taking risk, and you're able to do so without getting sued right and left. So we need tort reform.

And you know, I got to tell you, the plaintiff's attorneys are tough politically. But I believe it's the right thing to have a justice system that's fair, that you're not—that the legal system doesn't look like a lottery, but in fact, if somebody gets hurt, they've got their day in court. But if we keep having frivolous and junk lawsuits that threaten our employers, it's going to be hard to keep the job base active and alive here. So we need tort reform. We need less regulation.

In order to make sure that our economy continues to grow and jobs stay here, we've got to have free and fair trade. Let me tell you about the trade issue and my point of view on that. Most Presidents believe that it's important to have our markets open for foreign goods. Why? Because if you're a consumer, the more goods you have to choose from, the more likely it is you're going to get better quality at a better price. That's how the market works. And so administrations from both parties said, "Let's open up our markets for the good of consumers." My attitude is, is that if we treat a country by opening our markets, they ought to treat us the same way. That's good trade policy. We open up our markets; you open up yours.

And it's paying off. Our trade policy is paying off. Look at the agricultural sector here in America today. It's strong. You know why? Because our farmers can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere. All they needed was markets opened up to sell their products.

We need an energy plan. If we want to have jobs here, you know, we've got to have energy. And right now, we're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's just the way it is. I submitted an energy plan to the United States Congress over 2 years ago. It was a plan that said we've got to diversify our energy supply, but we've got to be—and we've got to be wise about how we use the energy we have. We need clean coal technology to make sure we can use precious coal. We can explore in environmentally friendly ways. We need alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. We need to be better at conservation. We need to promote technologies which change habits and uses, like hydrogen-driven automobiles. But for the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, I need an energy plan on my desk to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Health care is obviously an issue that matters as to whether or not we can keep jobs here at home. Listen, most people receive their health insurance through their jobs. And most—a lot of small businesses are having trouble affording health care. And what we need to do is allow small businesses to pool together so they can be able to purchase health care at the discounts that big businesses are able to do. It's prohibited now from doing that. It's called association health plans.

You'll hear me talk about health savings accounts in a minute, as an innovative way for people to be able to make sure that the decisionmaking process is between them and their doctors, and it's a way to hold down costs. We've got somebody here who has actually used a health savings account that has worked. There are things we can do to help people who can't help themselves. My philosophy of government says government ought to help people who can't help themselves and help people help themselves. And part of helping people who can't help themselves is to expand community health centers so low-income people can get primary care in places other than emergency rooms in your hospitals.

We delivered on a promise. As I said when I was campaigning, we'd modernize Medicare, and was able to get that through the Congress. The Medicare system was—is a really important system, but it was old and wasn't working that well. Think about this. We would pay for the heart surgery of a senior, and we wouldn't pay for the medication to prevent the heart disease in the first place. I didn't think that made much sense for the taxpayers and for the seniors. So I went to Congress and said, "Well, look, let's do our duty. Let's kind of set aside all this bickering and why don't we focus on what's good for the seniors."

And I was proud to sign a Medicare reform bill that, first of all, provides drug discount cards for seniors. And if you're a senior here, I would strongly urge you to look into the drug discount cards for savings for your prescriptions. Secondly, in '05, we're now going to pay for screenings, preventative screenings, for the first time for our seniors, so we diagnose early, before it's too late. And in '06, a system will show up where seniors actually have choices. If you want to stay in the system as it is, you can do so, and you get prescription drug coverage. If you want choice in the marketplace, you're able to design the program that meets your needs. So in other words, we're doing good work when it comes to health care.

And one thing I want to assure you, in all the discussion about health care, we're going to make sure that the doctor and patient are the decisionmakers, not bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I'll tell you a national issue that's an important issue when it comes to health care is medical liability reform. Green informed me that he had helped pass medical liability reform here in the State of Wisconsin. And it may not be nearly as big an issue here as it is elsewhere, but a lot of these lawsuits are driving docs out of business. I'm telling you, in State after State, one of the biggest complaints I hear from people is that, "My doc is leaving the business," or "His premiums are so high to stay in business, he's running up my cost."

Now, look, I don't think you can choose—I mean, I know you have to choose between patients and doctors and plaintiff's attorneys. You have to make a choice. You can't be for both. And my opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform now, for the sake of affordable and available health care.

Finally, let me talk about two quick things, and then we're going to talk to some of your fellow citizens here. One, education is really important for workers. If we want to keep jobs here in America, we better have a system that enables people to become retrained for the jobs which exist. That's why I'm a big backer of the community college system, and it's a system that's working. It's a system that is available and affordable. They're everywhere, at reasonable price, and there's plenty of Government aid to help.

So I travel the country a lot. And let me tell you an interesting story. I met a lady in Phoenix, Arizona, went to Mesa Community College. She had worked for 12 years as a graphic artist. She decided to go back to college, got a little help to do so, went back and got an associates degree. And her—in other words, she enhanced her skills. And her first job out of the community college paid more in her first year than she was making in her 12th year as a graphic artist. In other words, what education does is it makes you a more productive worker. And Government has got to encourage people to go back to community college by helping them to do so.

And if we want to keep jobs here, we've got to train people for the jobs which actually exist. This is a changing world. The economy is changing. I was thinking about down in North Carolina where some of these textile plants have moved out because they couldn't compete, but the health care industry was strong. And so the compassionate thing to do is to help people who have lost their job gain the skills necessary to work in a field that is dynamic, and you make more money doing so.

Now, finally, I want to talk about fiscal discipline and fiscal sanity in Washington, DC. In order to keep the job base expanding so people can find work here, we must not overspend your money. And we must keep your taxes down. See, running up the taxes right now will hurt our economy. And we'll talk to some people that—when we run up—if their taxes get—they're not going to get run up; the guy is not going to win. And so it's—but your fellow citizens ought to worry about somebody who is out there making promise after promise after promise, like over $2 trillion worth of new promises and not telling you how he's going to pay for it. You know, he says, "Well, we can pay for it because we'll tax the rich." Well, we've heard that kind of language before. And you know what happens with this kind of tax-the-rich deal. That's why they've got accountants and lawyers. [*Laughter*] So the rich figure out ways not to pay, and you get stuck with the tab. That's not going to happen in 2004.

Old Mike Shaver is with us. Where are you, Mike? Mike is a small-business owner. He owns Hudson Machine and Tool. Before you say something, Mike, I want to tell people how you're organized, if you don't mind. He is a Subchapter S corporation. You know what that means? He pays taxes at the individual income tax rate. So when you hear somebody saying, "Tax the rich," I want you thinking about small-business owners.

Most of small businesses in America are Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. They pay tax at the individual income tax rate. Therefore, when we said, "Let's cut taxes on everybody who pays taxes," we're also talking about small businesses. Seventy

percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And if you're worried about people find work—finding work, it makes sense to stimulate the small-business sector of our country.

So here's a Subchapter S. All right, tell us about your company. Here's your chance. [*Laughter*]

[*Mike Shaver made brief remarks.*]

The President. How many did you hire? How many did you hire?

Mr. Shaver. We hired about half a dozen people, eight people, maybe.

The President. Yes, that's it. Let me tell you something. He hires eight. Another vibrant small business hires eight, and all of a sudden, you got people working in America. That's what I'm talking about.

Go ahead.

Mr. Shaver. But what made it possible for us to hire these people is the policy that you put in place has enabled me to purchase capital equipment, and if I purchase capital equipment, I have to have people to run it.

The President. Let me tell you something. Part of the tax relief for small businesses was not just cutting the rates. We also incentivized people to buy equipment. In other words, if he bought equipment, he got a little extra help in the Tax Code.

And so what did you buy?

Mr. Shaver. We bought a horizontal machining center, and we added on to the building too.

The President. See, buys a horizontal machining center. [*Laughter*] But somebody had to make it, right? [*Laughter*] You see, we give—he makes a decision because the Tax Code said, you know, "It's in your interest if you do," which was to buy a machine. And somebody had to make the machine. And so what he just told you was, by buying a machine, it enabled him to hire two people. And by buying the machine, it also made the machine manufacturer more likely to either keep an employee or add one to help meet his demand. I think that's the way it works, don't you?

Mr. Shaver. That is correct.

The President. Yes, I understand it. Tell me about—he's got an interesting idea. First of all, are you planning on investing again?

Mr. Shaver. Yes, we've already—I've bought a—we spent about $150,000 this year so far on a new truck and a vertical machining center.

The President. You got the horizontal machining center—[*laughter*]. Education is really important. [*Laughter*]

Tell me about your—you got an interesting idea. See, one of the things that's important about having a vibrant small-business sector is that there's some really great ideas that happen through these entrepreneurs.

And so tell me about your apprenticeship program.

[*Mr. Shaver made further remarks.*]

The President. See, job training takes place in community colleges; job training takes place on the floors of small businesses. It's really important to make sure the small-business sector of the country is dynamic. The role of a Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which people like Mike Shaver feel comfortable about expanding the job base of America.

And I want to thank you for coming.

Mr. Shaver. Thank you very much.

The President. Appreciate you.

Doug Richardson is with us.

Doug Richardson. Right here, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, you're the same guy I met recently. [*Laughter*] He is the co-owner—you know, one of the things I love to talk about is ownership in America. I love it when guys like Mike and Doug own their own business. I love the idea of more people owning their own home. Do you realize that homeownership rates in America are at an alltime high? Isn't it wonderful to think about a country where more people own something. They open up their front door and say, "Welcome to my home." This guy Doug Richardson is co-owner, which is—I love the ring—he's an entrepreneur.

Tell us what you do.

Mr. Richardson. You stand up too.

The President. He's the other owner?

Mr. Richardson. The other owner is here too, Tim McCormick.

The President. Well, we've got you here because you're better looking. But anyway

—[*laughter*]—let me tell you, Dick Cheney is not the prettiest guy in the race. [*Laughter*] Of course, I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because he can do the job. He probably picked you because you're a great co-owner. [*Laughter*] God, I hope he's still for me. Anyway—[*laughter*]. Sorry, Doug, I didn't mean to dis your guy here.

Mr. Richardson. That's okay. I do it all the time. [*Laughter*]

The President. What do both of you do?

Mr. Richardson. Well, you talk about risk. We bought Parco Manufacturing, which—we manufacture vinyl windows and patio doors. Talk about increasing business, I'm sure a number of you are in need of windows around here.

The President. This guy is a marketing genius. [*Laughter*] Except, you need to look over there for the cameras; it's a much bigger crowd.

[*Mr. Richardson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Are you investing at all?

Mr. Richardson. We invested about 170,000 in equipment over the last 2 years——

The President. Horizontal or vertical? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Richardson. Neither.

The President. Yes, that's good. What do you buy, seriously?

Mr. Richardson. We buy delivery trucks.

The President. Good.

Mr. Richardson. We buy manufacturing equipment to build our windows. And we've also invested a half-million dollars into property and another factory.

The President. Great, congratulations. Classic small business: two guys, two buddies, said, "Let's get after it." They take a risk. That's part of how the economy works; they're willing to take risk. And because they're dreamers and doers, people are working. And the role of Government is to encourage through good tax policy. We don't need to be running up the taxes. Look, let me remind you all, when you hear, "Tax the rich—oh, don't worry, we're just going to raise the top rates," it's going to affect the entrepreneurial class of America because most small businesses are Subchapter S corporations. We need to keep the taxes low on the small businesses of America, in order for them to feel comfortable about expanding the job base.

Thank you. Good job. I appreciate you coming.

Roger Ripplinger is with us. Hey, Rog, how are you?

Roger Ripplinger. Doing great.

The President. Good. Well, me too. He is a—what do you do?

Mr. Ripplinger. I hire people.

The President. Yes, my kind of guy. Get after it, will you? [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Ripplinger made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, good. In other words, you're good at what you do. They hired you. Did you make any more money?

Mr. Ripplinger. I make a lot more money.

The President. Yes, see, what's happening is, is that, you know, it's an interesting world we're in—people are changing jobs, and that's a little unsettling. But if you're able to upgrade your skills or be good at what you do, a lot of times when people change jobs, they can make more money.

Now, one of the things that—let's see, you got a little tax relief. How much? Got to turn on his mike. I'll say that. He got a lot, he said. I'll be your interpreter. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Ripplinger. We got a check last July. And it was just in time—there we go—and it was just in time for back to school shopping, when all the sales hit, so we could even stretch it even farther. It was wonderful.

The President. He saved about $2,400 in his taxes last year. That's a lot of money for a family. And it's—you see, my philosophy—thank you, Rog—my philosophy is that Government meets priorities; once it meets its priorities, then the people can spend their money better than Government can. And I want Roger having that 2,400 in his pocket, because it helps the economy grow.

Did you do anything with it?

Mr. Ripplinger. Yes, we actually—we invested some.

The President. Good. That's a good thing.

Mr. Ripplinger. Yes, and we bought a new vehicle.

The President. That means there's more capital, by the way, available for people when they go out an buy horizontal machines.

[*Laughter*] That's how the economy works. When he says "investing," it's part of saving. Go ahead.

Mr. Ripplinger. And we bought a new vehicle as well.

The President. Good, yes, well, somebody had to sell it to you. And then somebody had to make it. By the way, parts of the tax relief package expire. See, the tax relief was not permanent—a permanent fixture. They said, "We'll give you tax relief for a while." And the child credit goes down to $700 a child this year if Congress doesn't act. The marriage penalty goes up if Congress doesn't act. The 10-percent bracket is affected if Congress doesn't act. This guy will pay $1,100 more in taxes if Congress doesn't act. So when you hear me going around the country saying, "Let's keep the tax cuts permanent," that's what I'm talking about, not taking money out of his pocket.

All right, Rog, thanks for coming.

We got the Garzas with us. There they are. Oh, yes. Who you got with you?

Jesse Garza. This is Page.

The President. Page.

Mr. Garza. Say, "Hi, Mr. President."

The President. Yes, I know how you feel sometimes. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. Kate and Jesse are workers—both of them in the workplace?

Mr. Garza. My wife is a hospice social worker here in——

The President. Thanks. Thanks for doing that.

Mr. Garza. Yes, no problem.

The President. No, I'm talking to her. [*Laughter*] Thanks for doing that—we'll try it again.

Kate Garza. My husband works for his family business and manages that.

The President. Great. The reason I've asked them to come is to talk about tax relief again. See, oftentimes in the course of the discussion about tax relief, we talk numbers. And people seem to forget—particularly in Washington—that tax relief affects people's lives in incredibly positive ways. How much relief did you get, 1,200? Yes. Isn't that right?

Mr. Garza. Yes, we did.

The President. And this year about $1,700, they tell me?

Mr. Garza. I hope so.

The President. She wants to talk.

Page Garza. Hi, Mr. President.

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] All education begins at home, by the way.

So what has it meant for you, tax relief? Explain. Here's your chance to tell people who say, "Oh, tax relief only benefited certain people."

[*Mr. Garza made brief remarks.*]

The President. Oh, fantastic. See, it helps people. It helps them with their lives. They improved their home because they've got another child coming. Tax relief helps families in tangible ways, and Congress needs to make it permanent. We don't need to be taking money out of the pockets of our small businesses and the working people here in America.

Mr. Garza. Mr. President——

The President. Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. Garza. If you want to help our family and the families out here, just do one thing: Win.

The President. Thank you, sir. I intend to. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

Finally, we've got Kris Walker with us. There he is.

Kris Walker. Mr. President.

The President. Yes. I'm George Walker Bush. He's old, just plain Kris Walker. [*Laughter*] Cousin.

Mr. Walker. Right on.

The President. Kris has done something; he's bought a health savings account. I've asked him to come because I want him to explain what it means. It's an interesting way for people to take care of their own health care needs. It's a very interesting concept, by the way, for small-business owners who are struggling with affordable health care.

Go ahead and tell us what it is.

[*Mr. Walker made brief remarks.*]

The President. Now, let me tell you what that is. Here's the way it works. He goes out and buys a high deductible, catastrophic plan, which means that after the deductible, insurance takes care of the health care needs. And then the health savings account says you've got your high deductible and then you can contribute, tax-free, to cover from zero to the limits of your deductible—tax-free.

And the money stays in your account and earns interest, tax-free. And you can take the money out, tax-free. And so in other words, it is an incentive program that he has used, and it is $700 a month less expensive.

Mr. Walker. [*Inaudible*]—dollars less. And for me, it's a great thing, and I think for the 35 million Americans that are uninsured, it's a fabulous way to be insured. And for small business, it's a great way to be competitive in the market.

The President. Yes, it really is. I appreciate you saying that. What's really interesting about this plan, by the way, is that it's—you see your own money. See, you put your own money in, tax-free. It's your money. You can save it over time if you don't spend it, obviously, and therefore, it provides an incentive to make better choices about health care needs. And all of a sudden, Kris starts saying, "Well, you know, I may not need this"—doc says you think you need it—"I may not need it." In other words, he is directly involved with the pricing and purchasing of health care, which I think is a vital component to make sure that health care decisions are aligned properly and that a health care market begins to adjust to consumer demand. And that's really what health savings accounts do. I really want to thank you for sharing with us his idea.

By the way, he got tax relief, and he got a tax relief big enough to make the cash contribution equal to his deductible. So in other words, it's—smart guy. I appreciate you sharing that with us.

Mr. Walker. Thanks for having me. Good luck in '04.

The President. Yes, thank you, sir. I appreciate you coming.

Listen, I want to thank you all for coming. I hope you found this to be an innovative way to talk about how to keep the country stronger. Let me talk about how to keep it safer.

I tell people that if this country shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift to tragedy. It's not going to happen on my watch. Our country changed on September the 11th. Our whole perspective about security and peace must change with the lessons of September the 11th. Let me share some of the things I've learned as the President.

First, we face an enemy that is—that has no conscience. They are—they'll cut off a head just like that and not care. They will take innocent life in order to achieve a dark vision. That's the reality of these people. That's why I tell people you cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best with them. In order to secure our country, we must stay on the offense and bring them to justice, defeat them elsewhere so we do not have to face them here at home.

That is the reality of the world we live in today, and it's a stark reality, but it's necessary. It's a reality that is in the forefront of my thinking. The Government has a solemn duty to protect us, and so when you hear talk about staying on the offense, that's why. And we're making progress. We're dismantling the Al Qaida network. And it's a hard work.

It's a different—I see some great vets here with us today. This is a different kind of war that we're in. It is a—[*applause*]. Thanks for coming, men. But it is a different kind of war than you're used to. It's a war where there is a patient, ruthless enemy that hides and waits for countries to lower their guard and then strikes. And they're trying to intimidate us. This is really—the war on terror is an interesting way to describe the world in which we live. It's really a battle and a struggle against ideological extremists who have hijacked a great religion and used terror as a weapon to intimidate people of good heart and good soul and good conscience. I clearly see the task at hand.

Secondly, in this new kind of war, we must not only deal with the terrorists; we must send clear signals to those who would harbor terrorists. See, we've got to disrupt their capacity to find safe haven. And when an American President speaks, he better speak clearly and mean what he says. If a President sends mixed signals, the world will drift toward tragedy.

And so I said to the Taliban, "Give them up, or face serious consequences." "Give them up" meant give up Al Qaida. They defied. They said, "America really doesn't mean what it says." But I did. And so we put together a coalition, and we routed the Taliban.

We upheld the doctrine. We said—[*applause*]. And the world is better for it. America is safer as a result of our action.

I told you about the people showing up to vote in Afghanistan. It is amazing to me, at least, to think that 3½ years ago, the Taliban, these unbelievably barbaric people, by the way, were running the country. They would take a woman out in the public square and whip her because they didn't think she conformed to their dark view of the world. If you dared speak out, if you dared exercise your religion in a way you were comfortable with, you were punished. And now they're headed toward a democracy. People are showing up to vote. The world is more peaceful as a result, and Afghanistan is an ally. They're an ally in the war on terror.

You know, I was in Cleveland a couple of weeks ago, and I was there to kick off the International Children's Games. And right there to my right as I stood up to say welcome to America, was the Afghan girls soccer team. It was amazing. It was a very emotional moment for me. I was so proud of our country that, in acting in our own self-interest, we acted in the interests of those young girls, who would not have been in our great country to play soccer had it not been for our willingness to uphold doctrine, to defend our security, and to liberate people.

Another lesson of September the 11th which is a vital lesson, and it's a lesson that's very important for our security, is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. See, I'm confident no—very few Americans would have ever felt that a President would have needed to stand up and say that, except September the 11th came. We used to think oceans could protect us. If we saw a threat overseas, we could say, "Gosh, well, there's a threat. We may have to deal with it, may not have to deal with it, but it's unlikely to cause us any harm." That's what happened on September the 11th—we no long have that luxury of thinking our security is afforded by protection from oceans.

And so I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I looked at his history. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. Remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. His organization was harbored there in Iraq. Zarqawi, we knew, was in and out. He's the guy who beheads people now and brags about it on Arab TV, trying to intimidate us. He was in and out of Iraq. He funded families of suiciders. That's an unconscionable act, and yet this guy said, "We'll provide a little financial incentive for you." He killed thousands of his own people. He's a dangerous man.

And remembering the lessons of September the 11th, I went to the United Nations and the Congress. I said to the Congress, I said, "Look, he's a threat. The intelligence shows he's a threat. His history shows he's a threat. And we've got to remember the world we live in." And the Congress responded. Members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence and data and came to the conclusion I came to. By far, the vast majority of Members of the Senate and the House—including my opponent, by the way—looked at the same intelligence and said, "Saddam Hussein was a threat."

I then went to the United Nations, and I did for a reason—one, I want that organization to be effective. And so I basically said, "Look, you can either be an empty debating society or an effective international organization. When you say something, you mean it." And secondly, they had said year after year after year, resolution after resolution after resolution, "You're a problem, and we'll deal with you," and they never did, which, in my judgment, emboldens a tyrant. It certainly didn't frighten the tyrant.

So I went to the United Nations and said, "Look, this is a different era. The world changed. We see a threat. Do you?" And in a 15 to nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council, they said, "Saddam is a threat. Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That is what the free world said.

And so we—but as he had for decades—a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands. He wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, we agreed to inspectors. We thought they would be a good thing.

Let me say something. Let me step back. The reason I thought diplomacy was important and the inspectors were important is because the use of military is the last option

of the President. It's serious business when the President puts people into harm's way. It is the toughest decision a Commander in Chief can make, to say to moms and dads and husbands and wives, "I believe it's necessary for your loved one to defend our security." And so I was hoping that we could solve this diplomatically and peacefully.

You know, he deceived the inspectors. So I'm confronted with a choice at this point. Having tried diplomacy, working with the United States Congress, and seeing the deception taking place, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of this madman and hope for the best, or do I take action to defend the country? I will tell you, given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you. A couple of other points I want to make. [*Applause*] Thanks. Thanks a lot. I appreciate that.

You know, we didn't find the stockpiles with thought we would find, but I want to remind you, he had the capability of making weapons. And had he once again defied the world, he would have made them. And having that capability, it also gave him the opportunity to pass them on to an enemy. It's a risk we just simply couldn't take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. I firmly believe America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Let me talk about three more points, then I'll answer some questions if we have time. Sometimes I can get a little windy. [*Laughter*]

We put together a vast coalition, nearly 40 countries in Afghanistan and nearly 30 in Iraq. And it's important we work with others in this war on terror because you've got to share intelligence, and you've got to work to cut off money. And when we find a threat, it's important to be able to pick up the phone and call a friend like Great Britain and say, "Pick this person up, please," because—"and here's the evidence." In other words, there's got to be a collaborative effort. And we are. And we're working closely with countries around the world. I'll continue to work on this coalition when I'm your President for 4 more years. But I will never turn over our security—national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I'm proud of the coalition we've put together. And it's very important for those of us with the microphones to be singing the praises of the coalition partners and thanking the moms and dads from Great Britain, Italy, South Korea, Japan, Poland, from all around the world, for the same contributions that the families of our troops have made.

And speaking about our troops, I made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones: They'll have all the support that we can give them from the Federal Government. And we met that duty. I don't know if you know this, but military pay is up by 21 percent since I've been the President. Housing is better for those who—for the loved ones of those who wear the uniform. We're transforming our military, which is important.

You know, we were configured—our troops deployments were configured for the cold war. We were configured to fight an enemy that no longer exists. The Soviet Union doesn't exist, and yet we had troops stationed around Europe, for example, with the equipment necessary to take on the Soviet Union. That's why at the VFW the other day, I said, "Wait a minute. Let's be smart about how we deploy our troops. Equipment has changed since the Soviet era. We can replace tanks with Stryker Brigades and achieve the same objective. We don't need as many troops stationed overseas anymore because the Soviet era is no longer a threat."

When you can replace land troops with more effective aircraft, it means people are stationed at home, that they can be deployed rapidly, and it means less unsettling times for our troops, less rotations, less pressure on the system, plus taxpayer savings. We're doing wise things with our military. We're funding the military and we're transforming the military to meet the threats of a new era. And it's important for the Commander in Chief to see clearly how best to align our military to keep the peace.

When it came to funding our troops, we have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I put a supplemental up to the Congress in September of last year. It was money for body armor and spare parts, ammunition,

and fuel, that which is necessary when you've got people in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq. And I want to thank the members of both political parties for their strong bipartisan support. We had great bipartisan support, so much so that only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. It's an issue in this campaign. He—when pressed, my opponent said, you know, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." It's kind of an interesting explanation. People around here are plain talkers. And then he went on, when pressed, to say, "Well, gosh, it was"—you know, "I did the right thing," or he's proud of his vote, I think he said, and then said, "It's a complicated matter." Now, there's nothing complicated about providing for our troops in combat. I will continue to be a Commander in Chief who supports our troops.

Two quick points. One, the goal in Iraq and Afghanistan is for there to be democratic and free countries who are allies in the war on terror. That's the goal. We will meet that goal by providing security so that their political processes can work. There will be Presidential elections this fall in Afghanistan. There will be elections in Iraq. There are two leaders in Afghanistan and Iraq who believe in the aspirations of their people. These are people who are committed to democracy. It's—we will stay there to get the job done.

It's—the Iraqis—it's tough to go from tyranny to freedom. You can imagine a society in which, if you stepped out of line, you were either done in or tortured. And so people in Iraq are watching us carefully. They wonder whether or not America is going to honor its word. That's why the other day I took exception when my opponent said, if he's elected, we'll substantially reduce the troops in 6 months. He shouldn't have said that. See, it sends a mixed signal to the enemy, for starters, so the enemy hangs around for 6 months and 1 day. It sends a mixed signal to our own troops, and it says something to the Iraqis. It says, maybe America isn't going to keep its word. It's vital when we say something to the Iraqi people, we keep our word, so that they begin to take risk toward a free society. They want to be free—they want to be free.

And so what the strategy is, to stay there as long as it takes to get the job done and not one day longer. That's the message I send to the people of Iraq and our troops and the enemy.

And you'll see an Afghan army grow up, and you'll see an Iraqi police force and army grow up to take care of those who want to stop the advance of freedom, and that's really what we're talking about.

Just real quick, I believe freedom changes societies, and I believe a free society is a peaceful society. And therefore, it is in our national interests to promote a liberty in a part of the world that is full of hatred and resentment and intolerance.

I talk about a dinner I had with Prime Minister Koizumi, and I think I talked about that today with some people on Air Force One, if I'm not mistaken. And anyway, so I'm having dinner with Koizumi, and we're talking about North Korea. See, I made the decision that no longer can we convince Kim Chong-il to disarm if it's only the United States talking to the North Koreans. I felt it was important to bring other countries into the mix, like China and Japan and South Korea and Russia, so there's now five countries saying to the tyrant in North Korea, "Disarm—disarm."

And so I'm talking to Prime Minister Koizumi about that. Really what I'm talking about is how to keep the peace, how to use U.S. influence and Japanese influence, in this case, to keep the peace. He's the Prime Minister of a country that my dad went to war with. It's amazing, isn't it, that, gosh, half a century later, after a young Navy pilot—and I'm sure your dads or granddads might have fought in the same theater—we're back talking peace with a former enemy. You know why? Because after World War II, my predecessor and others believed that liberty had the capacity to transform an enemy into a peaceful partner, and that's what happened.

There were some doubters and skeptics. "The reconstruction effort wasn't going well," or, "It was too tough over there, and maybe, maybe the Japanese don't have the capacity to self-govern." But somebody that served in Government had great faith in liberty and didn't abandon the concept that we hold dear. And here I am, sitting down with

the Prime Minister of Japan talking about the peace. Someday, when we complete our job in Iraq, an American President is going to be having dinner with an elected leader from Iraq talking about peace, and the world will be better for it.

I want to talk—just real quick, a story, and then I'll be glad to answer your questions. Let me say also, when I say liberty, by serving the cause of liberty, I tell people, serves our security interests. It also serves something which I believe is part of the American soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. We believe that in America. I think it's one of the most noble aspects of our national character, is that we believe in human dignity, no matter the religion of the person.

Let me tell you an interesting story, and then I promise to answer some questions. [*Laughter*] If Laura were here, she'd be giving me the hook. [*Laughter*] That's the way it is. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, the Oval Office door opens up and in walks seven men from Iraq, all of whom had had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. They had been to Houston, Texas, where a newscaster had—a quite famous newscaster—had raised money and set up a foundation to help people. He saw their story through a documentary, and he flew them to Houston to get new hands. So these guys come walking in the Oval Office—I mean, it was a powerful moment. The Oval Office is a—it's a shrine to democracy, and it tends to take everybody's breath away who walks in—except Mother's—[*laughter*]—who is still telling me what to do. [*Laughter*] And I'm listening—about half the time. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, so these guys walk in, you know, and I was emotional. They were emotional. And I said, "Why you?" He said, "The Saddam dinar had devalued and"—he was a merchant, a small-business man; I don't know if he was a Subchapter S corporation or not, but he was a small-business man. And he had sold dinars on a particular day to buy another currency, euros or dollars, so he could buy gold to manufacture his product. And because the Iraqi * dinar had devalued, Saddam Hussein plucked this guy out of society to punish him and six other small merchants, for the devaluation of their currency. He just summarily said, "You're it, come here," and cut his hand off.

Isn't it an amazing contrast, to think of a country that was ruled by a tyrant who just said, "We'll cut the hands off of people to make me look better," and a country that has got a compassionate individual who is willing to pay for their way to America to get a new hand? That's what we're talking about. It's such a stark, vivid contrast about a country that is compassionate and strong and decent and noble and a country run by a tyrant, where seven poor individuals had their lives severely affected until rescued by an American.

The guy takes a Sharpie. He holds the pen, and he writes "God Bless America" in Arabic. It was a powerful moment in my Presidency. I told him, I said, "Welcome to the Oval Office." I said, "I want you to understand that the Office of President is bigger than the individual, and when you have a free society in Iraq and have the institutions bigger than the people, no longer will a thug be able to summarily affect your life the way Saddam Hussein did." He said, "Thank God for America." He said, "You're my liberator." I said, "No, I want you to walk out and look in the camera, and I want you to thank the moms and dads of our service people and the taxpayers of America for liberating you and making you free."

These are historic times—these are historic times. I'm asking for 4 more years to spread freedom and peace.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me answer some questions right quick.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. You can chant that, or I'll answer questions. [*Laughter*] Yes, sir. Sit down, please. First of all, great color shirt. [*Laughter*] Go ahead and yell it. If I don't like it, I'll just change the question. [*Laughter*]

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* White House correction.

Praying for the President

Q. On behalf of all—thank you and God bless you. We're praying for you.

The President. Thank you. He said he's praying for me. I appreciate that. Thanks. And by the way, I appreciate the prayers. It's an amazing country, where people pray for me. It really is. It's great. Thank you.

Go ahead. Do you have a question?

The President and Labor Unions

Q. Yes. Being that Wisconsin and Minnesota are swing States and——

The President. Minnesota and Wisconsin are swing States, I agree with that.

Q. Thankfully, I believe, because of talk radio.

The President. Yes.

Q. But in addition to that, they're also big union States.

The President. Sure, union States.

Q. Being in a union——

The President. You're a union member. Good, see, I'm interpreting faithfully. [*Laughter*]

Q. But being a union member, I have had a lot of feedback that you're not 100 percent for unions, and I'd like you——

The President. Yes, he said—the question is, do I like unions?

Q. Well, that's one of—yes, that is the question.

The President. I respect everybody's right to unionize if they so choose. But let me tell you what's equally important. When you cut taxes, you cut taxes on people whether they're in a union or not. Your union members have got more money in their pocket, thanks to what I did. This wasn't a union-nonunion tax cut. This was a tax cut for everybody. And when you're securing America, you're securing it not only for union people but nonunion people. But go ahead. You tell your workers I respect unions, and I respect the people who work for unions.

Yesterday I was in Ridley, Pennsylvania, at a Boeing plant, a unionized plant, was warmly received on the shop floor by union workers. Go ahead. This is kind of like a dialog, you know. [*Laughter*]

Q. They believe the reason why is because of your views or your regulations on immigration, and I——

Immigration Policy

The President. Yes. He's asking my views on immigration. Thanks. Here's what I believe. I believe that we have a policy today that is not working, and my responsibility is to address problems. We have a situation where we've got willing employers who can't find workers here in America to fill jobs, who are looking for people who are coming across the border. Talk to some of your farm workers—they know what I'm talking about—or your—people—meatpackers. I mean, there's a lot of workers—lot of employers who can't find workers. Interestingly enough, there's a lot of people who want to improve themselves, and so they're willing to walk miles to work. And so I believe a good policy is for a willing employer, who can't find a U.S. citizen to fill the job, to be able to look in a legal fashion for somebody who's willing to fill the job.

I think that's an important part of keeping the economy growing. I also know it's an important part of being a compassionate America. I mean, why would you want to have a system where the employer is illegal, the worker is illegal, and if the worker gets harmed, he or she is fearful of bringing a complaint, for fear of not being able to fulfill their function.

Look, I was the Governor of the great State of Texas. We had a—[*applause*]—thank you, ma'am. We had a—there you go. We had a—we obviously had an issue with this. There's moms and dads who live in Mexico who feel an obligation to work to feed their kids, and if they can make $5 in America as opposed to 50 cents in Mexico, they're going to come. And so, therefore, in order to, in my judgment, to better enforce our borders, which we must do, we need a temporary-worker program that says to people—again, I repeat, if you can't find a worker, let's have it legal so you can find somebody to do the job.

Now, this will enable somebody to go back and forth to their country. There will be a—you know, looking forward to working with Congress on limiting this. This doesn't mean automatic citizenship. I don't think you ought to penalize people who have been waiting in line for citizenship with somebody who has got a temporary-worker card. But I think

the system needs to be changed, and that's what you can tell your union buddies, that this is a system that says we can't—if you can't find a worker, then you ought to be able to legally be able to hire somebody who's willing to do the job.

Let me also tell you something. One reason I'm for trade in our neighborhood is because I know ultimately the way to keep pressure off our borders is for people to be able to find work close to home, that people want to be able to work close to home. You got to understand, moms and dads in Mexico have the same desire as moms and dads here to put food on the table for their families. And if they can find work at home, it's going to take the pressure of our borders. And the best way to do so is to have free and fair trade in our neighborhood as well.

Yes, sir.

Culture of Life

Q. Could you tell us how you intend to cultivate what you call the "culture of life" in America?

The President. He wants to know about culture of life. Well, culture of life says that, Mr. President, sign the partial-birth abortion bill, in order to discourage the brutal practice of partial-birth. Encouraging a culture of life is to encourage parental notification laws. Encouraging a culture of life is to say that if a pregnant mom is killed, that that person who killed that mom is also equally culpable for the death of their child. In other words, it's to pass reasonable laws that begin to say to people, life matters in America.

Now, cultures change slowly, and this is still a very—it's a very heartfelt debate on behalf of—in the political process, on the abortion issue. And my attitude is, is that I'll sign laws that begin to change people's perception of life and, at the same time, speak out for a culture of life, because I think a culture of—a society that embraces a culture of life is a much more hospitable, generous, and compassionate society. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Yes, what you got? The mike holder has got a question.

Drug Use/Faith-Based Initiative

Q. What I would like to ask——

The President. Here I'm standing by the speaker. Kind of blew me——

Q. Well, first of all, is that I agree with this gentleman. I'm glad that we're all praying for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I'm a local youth minister, recently hired. And one of the things—two of the things we've talked about today are enemies and freedom. And I believe that the enemy that we need the greatest freedom from right now happens to be Satan, and it's the enemy that we also don't necessarily always see. There's so many people who are being attacked on every level. A lot of those people are youth that are in our middle schools and our high schools. And I was just wondering how we can do more for faith-based initiatives for children, before they're drug addicts?

The President. Yes. I appreciate you saying that. Look, well, first of all, it's for me to call upon people such as yourself to interface with children early, before it's too late. You answered the question by your actions. But in terms of reducing demand for drug—you ask a specific issue on drug use, for example. We've got a collaborative effort with faith-based groups, community groups, neighborhood groups all aimed at sending the same message you're sending. And it's a kind of universal effort necessary to say to a child, "Drugs will destroy you." And it's working, frankly. We've reduced drug use by 11 percent in 3½ years—it's not "we," it's community groups have done so in 3½ years.

You're right, there needs to be a positive message sent to our youth. There also needs to be a focused effort on helping the drug addicts who consume most of the drugs. A percentage of—a relatively small percentage of the people consume most of the drugs, and that's why I'm working with Congress to fund a drug recovery program, of which an integral part of that will be a Faith-Based Initiative. And the way it works is, is a person gets a voucher that he or she can redeem at the program he or she chooses that meets her own or his own needs. And that includes the ability of faith-based programs to become involved, as I told you, with helping people change their hearts and, therefore, change their lives.

Thank you for what you do. I appreciate you being a youth minister. Thanks.

Yes, ma'am. You're not nervous, are you? [*Laughter*]

Funding for the Arts

Q. No, not at all.

The President. You kind of look like it. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President—[*inaudible*]—pray for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. ——I realize what you've done, and I was curious to know what your—[*inaudible*]—is for funding leaders involved across the United States.

The President. Funding the arts? Well, we do that through the National Endowment of the Arts, is the best way to do that. It's the vehicle that we use in Washington, DC.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Sure. You're welcome. Glad you're here.

Yes, ma'am.

Prescription Drug Costs

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. Great question. Her question was about the cost of drugs. Well, one is to expedite generic drugs on the market. Generic drugs are sold at a vast discount from brand-name drugs. And we put through, in the Medicare bill, as well as executive action through the FDA, a way to speed generics to the market so people are able to buy the very same drug that's sold at 50 at 10.

Secondly, I believer that part of good marketing is for people to have exposure to price of drugs. So one of the things we've done is we've put a virtual market right on the computer for people to look up the different costs of drugs at their local pharmacy, so that there's better selection when it comes to purchasing.

Thirdly, we are studying whether or not importation will work. I put together a committee to make sure that—look, what I don't want to do is be the President that says, "We'll allow for importation," and all of a sudden, drugs that are manufactured somewhere else come in over the Internet, and it begins to harm our citizens. But I'm looking at this. There is a lot of pressure in Congress for importation. So I think it makes sense for us to make sure that we can do so in a safe way. If it's safe, then it makes sense.

But again, I repeat to you, I have an obligation to—for the safety of our citizens. And what I don't want is somebody to say, "Oh, gosh, I'll be able to buy a cheaper drug from Canada," and that drug ends up coming from another country without proper inspection and proper safety. I believe—I know Government has an obligation to make sure, before we put policy in place, that that which somebody buys is actually the product they think they're buying and it's safe. We have an obligation to do that.

So there are some of the decisions that will make—hopefully help keep the cost—but by far, the most effective way to help on drug costs is to move generics to the market faster. People say, "Well, why aren't they moving fast?" Well, first of all, you want people to be able to recoup investment. I mean, part of allowing for a drug company to be able to price a drug at a higher rate for a while is so that they can recoup research and development. And we want our pharmaceutical companies to be on the leading edge of change. I mean, they've come up with some amazing cures for diseases through research and development. And it's an incentive for them to be able to recoup that investment.

But for a while, until we got in there, they were able to deny or delay generic drugs from being able to come on the market to compete with the brand-name drug through all kinds of interesting head fakes, I guess, is the proper way of putting it. In other words, they'd say, "Well, there's a patent issue here or a patent issue there," and they would delay, delay, and delay. And so what we've done is we've said, "Here's a reasonable time for you to recoup your investment, and then generics are coming behind." And there's a lot of generics coming on to the market. And part of making sure that people get drugs at a reasonable price is for there to be consumer information available. And that's also a response of the—responsibility for Medicare bureaucracy.

Listen, I've got the hook. I got the sign to go. We could be here for hours, but the problem is there's about 15,000 people waiting somewhere else—[*laughter*]—equally as important as you all. They vote. It's an important State, as the guy said. He said, "It's a swing State." We intend to not only carry Wisconsin but Minnesota as well.

I want to thank you all for coming. I hope you've enjoyed this as much as I have. Thank you for your help. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:28 p.m. at Lakefront Park. In his remarks, he referred to Dale Schultz, candidate for Congress in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District; Mayor Jack Breault of Hudson, WI; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks in St. Paul, Minnesota

August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much for coming. Thanks for having me. I'm glad we came, Mr. Mayor. I'm proud to stand by your side. I am really proud to have your endorsement. St. Paul has got a wise and tough and principled man as the mayor of this city. I appreciate him bucking the political winds to do what he thinks is right in the 2004 campaign.

You know, there's a lot of differences in this campaign. The other day, my opponent said he thought you could find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood. I think you can find it right here in this hall. I'm proud to be with the heart and soul of America tonight, and thank you for coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm in this important State to let the people know I'm asking for the vote. There is more to do to make America a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place for every single citizen.

I'm also here to thank the grassroots activists for your support. I want you to work hard to put up the signs, man the phones, register your friends and neighbors to vote. I appreciate all your hard work, and when you get them headed toward the polls, remember that George Bush and Dick Cheney are what's best for this country. [*Applause*] Thank you. With your help, we will carry the great State of Minnesota. With your help, we'll achieve a great victory in November of this year.

I only wish Laura could be here to see and hear this crowd. She's a wonderful mother and a great wife. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Listen, I admit it. He's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment, his experience, his ability to get the job done.

I'm proud to be up here with a great United States Senator, Norman Coleman. I appreciate his service. He's here with his dad. It's good to see you, Mr. Coleman. Thank you for being here. I want to thank members of the Minnesota congressional delegation who are here, Gil Gutknecht, John Kline, and Mark Kennedy, three fine Members of the House. Thank you all for coming, proud you're here.

I want to thank Pat Anderson and Erik Paulsen for coming. I want to thank all the elected officials who are here. Thank you for serving your State and your community.

I appreciate Laura Ingraham for being the emcee of this fine event. I want to thank all the veterans who are here tonight. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank my friend Joe Repya. I want to thank the Minnesota Teen Challenge Choir for joining us tonight. Thank you all for coming. And I appreciate my friend Ricky Skaggs for being here as well.

Most of all, thank you all for taking time out of your day to come by and say hello. I appreciate it. It means a lot—it means a lot. You know, in the past few years we've been through a lot together. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that's to determine who best to lead this Nation forward. I'm asking for the vote because so much is at stake. We have so much more to do to move this Nation forward. We've got more to do to create jobs and to improve

our schools. We've got more to do to protect our homeland and spread the peace. We've made much progress, and there is more to do.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. You know, when we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of the children were being shuffled grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in accountability so we know whether or not our children can read and write and add and subtract. We're willing to challenge the status quo if our children are being failed in America.

There's more work to do. We want our high schools to issue a diploma that means something. We want to encourage math and science so our children have the schools necessary to work in the—for the jobs of the 21st century. We'll bring the Internet to high-level—for high-level training in the classrooms. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the confidence and the skills necessary to realize the great promise of America.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. You might remember the old debates on Medicare. Year after year, the politicians would promise you a modernized Medicare system. We got the job done. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose the plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs. We've done more. We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans so they can get primary care in places other than emergency rooms in your hospitals. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices for their own health care and making health care more affordable, we are moving America forward.

Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health care. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do.

We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll do more to expand research and seek new cures. And to make sure we've got available and affordable health care, we must have medical liability reform. I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I stand with the patients and doctors. I support medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

And there's more work to be done to make our economy stronger. Our economy's been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through a terror attack that some estimated cost us a million jobs. We've been through corporate scandals. But we've overcome these obstacles, because the spirit of America is strong. We've got great workers, great farmers, great small-business owners. And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You know, we didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We did it the fair way. We said, "If you pay Federal income taxes, you ought to get relief." We helped our families with children. We reduced the marriage penalty. It's a bad tax system that penalizes marriage. We ought to be encouraging marriage in America. We helped our small businesses, and this time, the check actually was in the mail. Because we acted, our economy has—since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added 1.5 million new jobs since last August and the unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent. Because we acted, Minnesota's unemployment rate is at 4.4 percent. When it comes to creating jobs, we're moving America forward, and we're not going to turn back.

Our farm economy is strong, and I intend to keep it that way. I appreciate the farmers who are here today.

There's more work to be done to make sure that we've got jobs here in America. Listen, we need an energy plan. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress nearly 2 years ago. It needs to get to my desk—an energy plan that encourages conservation, renewable sources of energy, an energy plan that encourages the exploration of natural resources here, close to home, in environmentally friendly ways. But one thing is certain: For the sake of economic security and the sake of national security, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We got to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm a strong backer of lifetime learning for America's workers and the smart utilization of our community college system here in this country.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here in America, we need reasonable regulations on our business creators, our job creators. We need tort reform. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure we open up markets for Minnesota products, and reject economic isolationism. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

We have a difference in opinion on this campaign about taxes. My opponent said that he's going to—he promised about over $2 trillion of new programs. And so we said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, I'll pay for it by taxing the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? You've heard that line. That's why people hire accountants and lawyers, so you won't be able to tax them. You can't raise enough money to pay for all his spending by so-called taxing the rich. He's going to try to stick you with the tax bill. We're not going to let him raise your taxes. He's not going to win. When you put me back into office for 4 more years, I'll continue to pursue a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer agenda that enables America to remain the strongest economy in the industrialized world.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war against the terrorists, and many young girls go to school for the first time in their lives. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler in Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. Saddam Hussein was a threat.

One of the important lessons that we must never forget is that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. I recognized that. I realized that, and so I went to the United States Congress and said, "I believe there is a threat in Iraq." Members of the Congress, the House and the Senate, members of both political parties, including my opponent, came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat. Listen, the hardest decision a President ever makes is to commit those who wear our uniform into combat. It's a hard decision, and it ought to be the last option for a President. So I went to the United Nations, and I said to the United Nations, I said, "I believe there's a threat." They looked at the same

intelligence; they remembered the same history and came to the same conclusion. They passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

The world spoke. But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the world. He wasn't about to disclose or disarm, because he didn't think there were serious consequences. As a matter of fact, we sent—we didn't—the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, but he systematically deceived the inspectors. I knew he was systematically deceiving the inspectors, as did others. So I had a choice to make: Either to forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman who is a sworn enemy of America, or take action necessary to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we expected to find, I want you to remember that Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. And that was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same course of action. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Massachusetts Senator now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpiles of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I appreciate him clarifying his position. [*Laughter*] There are—however, there are still 76 days left in the campaign for him to change his mind.

We have more to do. I'm running because I understand there's more work to be done. We must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You can't negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to join us in the defeat of our enemies. Listen, there's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate the sacrifices the moms and dads and husbands and wives of those countries are making alongside those of our country to secure our freedom. We will continue to build alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful democratic societies. See, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people. And we have a clear goal in those two countries, peaceful and democratic societies which are allies of ours in the war on terror. We will help those people meet those goals by providing security as the political process moves forward. We will help them train their own troops, so they can step up and do the hard work necessary for a free society. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

We have a difference of opinion as to how to handle this issue in Iraq. After all, my opponent said the other day that if he's elected, the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. I don't think it's a wise statement. You see, it sends the wrong signal. I mean, after all, the enemy says, "Fine, I'll wait 6 months and 1 day." It sends the wrong signal to our troops. It sends the wrong signal to the Iraqis. See, they're watching carefully. They wonder whether or not we will stand with them as they do the hard work for a free society to emerge. So long as I am the President, when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women that wear our uniform. I'm really proud of our military. We've got a fantastic military. I've traveled

our country and met with our troops. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. Ladies and gentlemen, I can assure you the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I have made a commitment to them and to their loved ones: Our troops will have the resources they need to fight and win the war against the terrorists. And that's why—so last September I went to the Congress, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, and I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This was an important piece of legislation. It was money for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. We received great bipartisan support. Members of both political parties recognized that when you had people in harm's way, they deserve the full support of Government. As a matter of fact, it was such good bipartisan support only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him to explain his vote. He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I don't think they talk that way in St. Paul, Minnesota. They pressed him on the vote, and he said, well, he's proud of the vote. Then he finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We'll work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will serve as powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace that we all want. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of America. We understand freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There are enemies who hate us, and they're still plotting. It's the reality of the world we live in today. We have a difference of opinion about these folks. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is wrong. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the enemy we face. See, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. I think it's wrong to blame the actions of our country for the anger and evil of those killers. You don't create terrorists by fighting back. We defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're working hard here at home to protect you. There's a lot of really good, decent people at the Federal level, the State level, the first-responders here in St. Paul, Minnesota, that are working long hours to do everything we can to protect the American people. This is our most solemn duty. It's what we're called to do. We created the new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act is necessary for law enforcement to be able to protect you. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than before. I've already taken a lot of action on a majority of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. We're working hard to secure our ports and our borders, to train first-responders, to improve dramatically our intelligence-gathering capability.

We're working on reform. It's not easy in Washington to reform things. There's a lot of entrenched interests there. There's a lot of people interested in defending the status quo. You see, it's not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get the job done.

When it comes to reforming our schools to provide excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms to get families and seniors more access and more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and

spreading freedom and peace, we are getting the job done. What I'm saying to you is, when it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in the White House who can get the job done.

You know, we live in a time of rapid change. These are exciting times, and times have changed. It's important for Government to help by standing side by side with families and workers. And a great way to do that is to promote an ownership society. I'll continue to promote ownership in America. Listen, it's important for people to own their own health care account so if they change jobs, they can take their own health care account with them. If you're a younger worker, you ought to be concerned about the fiscal stability of Social Security. Old baby boomers like me are okay, but for younger workers, there's a question about the fiscal solvency of Social Security, and therefore, I think you ought to be given the choice to have a personal savings account and Social Security to call your own.

You know, one of the great—one of the heartening statistics of our country today is ownership rates are at an alltime high. It's a fantastic thought, when you think more and more Americans from all walks of life are opening the door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." We want more people to own things. We want to create an environment so more people own their own business. We want the small-business sector of our economy to remain vibrant and strong. The reason why I continue to promote an ownership society in America is because I understand if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In changing times there's some things that won't change: Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matter and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Listen, the culture of our country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in your community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion all across America. See, I understand the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put love in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you. What can I do to help you? I want to walk with you. I want to stand with you." You see, I believe by rallying the armies of compassion, we can change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, to make sure this great American experience is available to all our citizens.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep belief in the values that make us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. Workers in hardhats were yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking people's hands and a guy looked me in the eye, his bloodshot eyes, he'd just come out of the rubble, saying, "Do not let me down."

It was a powerful day. You know, I came away from that site recognizing that everybody there searching through the rubble took that day personally. My fellow citizens took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. Every day that I wake up, I think about how best to secure our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work. But there's more work to be done to move this country forward. During the next 4 years, we will spread opportunity and ownership throughout every corner of our country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to work to spread freedom and peace.

You know, when I campaigned in your State 4 years ago, I asked—when I was asking for the vote, I made a pledge to the people of Minnesota and the people of our country that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Xcel Energy Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Randy Kelly of St. Paul, MN; Minnesota State Auditor Patricia Anderson; Minnesota State Representative Erik Paulsen; talk radio show host Laura Ingraham; Lt. Col. Joe Repya, USAR (Ret.) Bush Cheney '04 Minnesota Veterans Co-Chair; country music entertainer Ricky Skaggs; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Memorandum on Determination To Make Available Assistance for Liberia

August 20, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–43

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Administrator, United States Agency for International Development

Subject: Determination to Make Available Assistance for Liberia

Consistent with the authority vested in me under the Act Making Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Defense and for the Reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, 2004 (Public Law 108–106), under the heading "International Disaster and Famine Assistance," I hereby determine that it is in the national interest and essential to efforts to reduce international terrorism to furnish $86 million in assistance for Liberia from funds made available under that heading.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 14

In the morning, in Redmond, WA, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Sioux City, IA, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with

USA Freedom Corps volunteer Marj Kamrath.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

August 15

In the morning, the President traveled to Fort Myers, FL, and then took a helicopter tour of the area damaged by Hurricane Charley on August 13.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Punta Gorda, FL, where he met with public safety personnel at the Charlotte County Emergency Operations Center and toured the area damaged by Hurricane Charley.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 16

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Cincinnati, OH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Alexandra Amend. Later, he toured the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Traverse City, MI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Sheila Blonshine.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board: B. John Garrick, William Howard Arnold, Daryl Busch, George Milton Hornberger, Andrew C. Kadak, Ali Mosleh, and Henry Petroski.

The President announced his intention to designate W. Ronald Evans as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Capital Revitalization Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate D. Michael Rappoport to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to Florida, impacted by Tropical Storm Bonnie and Hurricane Charley beginning August 11 and continuing, by authorizing an increase in the level of Federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures.

August 17

In the morning, the President had intelligence and FBI briefings. He then had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy to discuss the situation in Iraq. Later, he met with the National Security Council.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Ridley Park, PA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Tom Shaffer. Later, he toured the Boeing Co.'s Ridley Park plant.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Hedgesville, WV, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Marge Ruth.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 18

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then traveled to Chippewa Falls, WI. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with Newsweek.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to River Falls, WI, and then to Hudson, WI. Later, he traveled to St. Paul, MN.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

August 19

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

August 20

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had a telephone conversation with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld to discuss the situation in Iraq and other issues. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown to discuss recovery efforts in Florida in response to Hurricane Charley.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the inauguration of Martin Torrijos as President of

Panama on September 1: Colin L. Powell (delegation leader); Linda Watt; Cesar B. Cabrera; Rod Carew; and Francis Rooney.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released August 16

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Florida

Fact sheet: Honoring Our Commitment to America's Veterans

Fact sheet: Making America More Secure by Transforming Our Military

Released August 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Claire Buchan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4842

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on continuation of U.S. drug interdiction assistance to the Government of Colombia

Released August 18

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Supporting and Strengthening the Military and Military Families

Released August 19

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Transcript of remarks by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and a question-and-answer session at the U.S. Institute of Peace

Statement by the Press Secretary on the anniversary of the 2003 terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad

Released August 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Acts Approved by the President

Approved August 17

H.R. 4842 / Public Law 108–302
United States-Morocco Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act

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